

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STEPHEN HAWKING SCHOOL**

Limehouse

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 131023

Headteacher: Christine Sibley

Reporting inspector: George Derby  
25349

Dates of inspection: 16 - 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 249426

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 2 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Brunton Place  
London

Postcode: E14 7LL  
Telephone number: 020 7423 9848  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Pamela Mason

Date of previous inspection: 30 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Registered inspector	Science	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
17541	Frances Ashworth	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Personal, social and health education</p>	<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p>
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>English</p> <p>Religious education</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	<p>Educational inclusion</p> <p>Foundation stage</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Music</p>	

22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History Physical education	
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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stephen Hawking school is a day special school. It is designed for 76 pupils aged 2 to 11; just over two thirds of pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and one third, severe learning difficulties (SLD). A number of pupils also have complex medical conditions. One third of children are in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and are under six years of age. The school has grown considerably since it was opened in 1996. It is very popular with parents and it often has more pupils than it has places for. Pupils who enter the main school have very low levels of attainment in comparison with other pupils of their age. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is wider, but well below average when compared to pupils of a similar age nationally. Nursery staff help to assess children and provide early, intensive intervention programmes; a few children are then able to move on to mainstream or to other special schools, rather than continuing in the school. A very high percentage of pupils (71 per cent) take free school meals and housing issues and unemployment are features of the area that the school serves. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very high. Currently, 85 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. None are at an early stage of language acquisition because of this; the difficulties they have with language are related to their learning difficulties. The majority of pupils are from Bangladeshi homes, although there are pupils from other ethnic groups. In most of these homes, English is spoken in addition to the parents' own language. A few pupils (predominately from Somalia) come from refugee backgrounds.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Stephen Hawking is a good and effective school. It has some very good and excellent features to its work. Pupils achieve well through the very good teaching and high level of quality support they receive from staff. The school strongly promotes pupils' independence and their personal development. Great care and concern for all pupils' physical and emotional needs and their personal well-being pervades the school. However, pupils could achieve even more if a speedier response was made to updating some aspects of the planning for pupils' learning. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior management team, especially in relation to the high expectations and the procedures they have for ensuring quality teaching. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The whole school 'atmosphere' of care, concern and welfare for pupils and the valuing of their individual contributions (including their cultural heritage) results in pupils putting an outstanding effort into their work.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is also very good; relationships throughout the school are very strong.
- The teaching is very good; the knowledge that staff have of their pupils is very good and their expectations for pupils are high. Support for pupils' mother tongue and English as an additional language is very strong.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very well promoted; opportunities to understand and celebrate faiths and cultures are excellent.
- The way parents, the community and businesses are encouraged to be involved in pupils' learning, is very strong; parents are very well supported towards understanding the nature of their children's difficulties and how best to help them.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and has some excellent features.

#### **What could be improved**

- The pace, rigour and focus of the school's development planning, especially the updating of planning in the light of national changes in curriculum and assessment, the governors' involvement in monitoring progress towards targets set and the recording of outcomes and decisions made by them.
- Writing by pupils, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and the understanding by staff as to how this can be approached with their pupils with more complex needs.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in July 1997. The quality of teaching has improved well through rigorous monitoring and 'coaching' to ensure that the best teaching takes place. Pupils' progress has improved; it is now good whereas previously it was satisfactory. Progress on the key issues has been sound. An adequate policy for child protection is now in place and the strategic role of the governing body is satisfactory, although until recently the work of governors was only undertaken by a few people. Planning is in place for all subjects. However, they do not go far enough in supporting teachers' planning or pupils' progress. Many have not yet been updated in line with the new National Curriculum 2000 or take account of recent national guidance for pupils with learning difficulties. The provision for ICT and geography has improved well and is now good; for history, provision is now satisfactory and improvement also satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 2	by Year 6	Key
speaking and listening, signing and watching	A	A	B	very good A
reading	A	A	B	good B
writing	B	C	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	A	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Overall, pupils' achieve well. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic groups. Children's achievements are very good in the Foundation Stage, where teachers of children under six know their needs very well and have designed a curriculum that meets their needs effectively. Throughout the school, very good attention to pupils' personal skills means they achieve very well in PSHE. Pupils' IEP targets clearly identify the most important things pupils need to learn and they make very good progress towards these. Achievement is good in English, mathematics and science overall. In ICT pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievements in all other subjects are good. Music pervades all aspects of the school's work and supports pupils' interest and listening very well. However, inconsistency in the use of different ways, including ICT, to promote learning and communication weakens a small number of pupils' progress, especially in writing. In addition, because the planning for many subjects lacks detail and has not been updated, pupils' progress in these is not supported as best it could; this means that the effect of the very good teaching is not fully realised and pupils' progress could be better. The school is at the beginning stages of setting targets for raising whole school attainment. It has used the percentage of pupils' IEP targets achieved as a measure and realised this is not the best way. It is now considering more effective ways of doing this using the P level (*the national differentiated performance criteria*) assessment data, which the school holds.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested and responsive in their lessons and work very productively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well. There is absolutely no indication of bullying, unsociable or racist behaviour. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are delighted to see visitors and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy the wide range of cultural celebrations and socially act as 'school family'. Pupils take their responsibilities well, although opportunities for these could be greater; relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils' really enjoy coming to school and the school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance despite absence due to illness.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Lessons seen overall	very good	very good	good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. It positively contributes to pupils' good learning in lessons. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. A significant strength here is the knowledge of the teachers and their team work with support staff. Activities are very well planned to meet the needs of the children. Teaching is also very strong for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is because of the knowledge staff have of their pupils and the strong ways they build on pupils' previous experiences. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. Here, there is a wider range of teaching expertise than in other parts of the school and one or two teachers are just getting used to planning for pupils with the most complex difficulties. Overall, teachers' planning is satisfactory; in a few cases this is detailed, but in others it does not sufficiently identify what pupils are intended to learn in the short term. However, because of many teachers' experience and their expertise, their practical planning is very good. They are clear in their own minds as to how the learning in lessons contributes to what they intend pupils to learn in the medium term. Teachers have a strong commitment to improving pupils' individual achievements. Pupils respond positively to this and to the very good support provided by teachers and support staff in lessons. The effort the pupils put into their work is excellent. All groups of pupils are generally well included in lessons and their needs well met. However, more consistent support and advice to staff from outside specialists and therapists concerning some pupils with complex needs, including those with sensory disabilities, would enable these needs to be met more effectively. Homework supports pupils' learning well. Literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted during most lessons. The teaching of English is very good and especially the approaches to promoting speaking, listening, signing, watching skills and reading skills. However, although the teaching of writing is sound, there is a lack of consistent support for some pupils' communication and writing needs using ICT. Signs and symbols could also be more consistently used throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics and science is good. Very good teaching was seen in geography and PSHE. Teaching is good in all other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Activities are really meaningful for pupils. Very good provision is made for personal and social education. The community, and activities outside lessons, make a significant contribution to the programme of work pupils receive. Lunch and playtimes are used particularly well. The curriculum is wide ranging with reasonable amounts of time for each subject and meets legal requirements, although the planning in many subjects is insufficiently detailed. The very good curriculum for Foundation Stage children meets their particular needs well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)	Very good. Pupils and their families are very well supported through the schools' considerable efforts to ensure that all pupils are fully included and parents are fully aware of how to help their children and about the progress they make. The home-school liaison worker makes a significant contribution to this process. As a result, pupils with EAL make good progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Staff make very good use of the spontaneous opportunities which arise for pupils' spiritual development, both in lessons and in the celebration of festivals and pupils' achievements. The very good programme for personal development contributes very significantly to pupils' moral and social development. Cultural opportunities are excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The support provided for pupils' emotional and physical care is very good. Child protection procedures are very good. Staff have a really good knowledge of their pupils. Procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are highly effective. Personal development is monitored well. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the use the information gained is good.

Links with parents are very good and parents view the school very positively. The school is also very supportive of its parents and keeps them well informed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. They work well together and have built a very strong team of teachers and support staff. They have been instrumental in engendering very good staff morale. Staff skills are recognised and their strengths used well. The management's approach ensures all staff are included well in school development and decision making, share the school's vision and are committed to whole school priorities. However, the implementation of aspects of school development is taking too long and needs more rigour.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. A small number of governors have been strongly supportive in shaping the development of the school and the chair, in particular, has been instrumental in helping to improve provision. The governing body meets most of its statutory duties soundly, although there has been insufficient oversight of curriculum development. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths but do not always know about

	necessary improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher, senior management and subject co-ordinators have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff very well and give very good support to them. Co-ordinators have begun to monitor their subjects, although this is still in the early stages of development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is now very good for day-to-day management of finances. Financial planning and control are satisfactory. The governors' committee to oversee the budget and monitor spending is effective. The school development plan has relevant priorities, but procedures for reviewing spending decisions and evaluating their impact are informal; the success criteria in the plan do not always help governors assess cost effectiveness. Specific grants are used well.

The accommodation is very good. Staffing levels are good; support staff are skilled and experienced. Therapy provision and external support are limited in parts. Learning resources for subjects are good. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value, although aspects of this are limited.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents like nearly everything about the school and are highly supportive of its work. Parents especially feel comfortable in approaching the school with a problem, think the school is well led and managed and identify that their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few parents were concerned about the school's communication with them.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with what pleases parents most. Forty per cent of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressing highly positive views of the school. Inspectors found that communication and information provided for parents is good, although more varied ways of providing this could be found, especially for those parents who do not read English or whose language does not have a written form.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

##### Strengths

- Very good progress in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception).
- The good progress made in all subjects except geography and personal, social and health education, where progress is very good.

##### Areas for improvement

- Progress in writing.
- The systematic use of ICT, signs and symbols to enable pupils to express their ideas in verbal, written or pictorial form.

#### ***Introduction***

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. Pupils' attainment is well below what is expected for their age for most pupils when they enter the school in nursery. There is a wider spread of ability in the nursery and a number of high attaining pupils leave the school and start Reception in a mainstream school. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils' attainment is very low relative to national norms. A significant number of pupils attain levels throughout their life in the school, below National Curriculum Level 1 and are recorded on the nationally recognised *differentiated performance criteria* ('P' levels) as between 'P1' and 'P8'.

#### ***Pupils' achievements across the school***

2. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good overall. At the time of the last inspection their progress was satisfactory; this represents a good improvement. The children's achievements are very good in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) in all areas of learning because of the very good way the curriculum is planned and the thorough knowledge the teachers and support staff have of the needs of the children. The teaching in this department is very good. A rich range of activities is provided and the programmes of work build very well on what the children have learned before in small steps. This aids their progress significantly.
3. In Year 1 to Year 6, pupils learn well because of the good teaching overall and the strong teamwork among staff. Although the support from external specialists, including teachers of pupils with sensory disabilities and therapists is limited, the time that is available to the school is used well and there is good liaison. There are weaknesses in curriculum planning in many subjects and this reduces the progress that some pupils make. For instance, although there is very good teaching in English and history, the good progress that pupils make could be even better, if planning better supported their progress. The curriculum for many subjects has not been revised and updated and schemes of work do not provide enough detail for teachers. Most of the experienced teachers do seek information from elsewhere and share ideas among each other, as they recognise these deficiencies. However, the way the planning is currently arranged does not help new or inexperienced teachers.
4. The considerable number of pupils (the majority of the school) who have English as an additional language make the same good progress as the rest of the pupils. Pupils with SLD and PMLD make good progress and those with additional special educational needs (mainly those with severe visual and hearing impairment) also make good progress.

#### ***Pupils' achievement in subjects***

5. Pupils' achievement in English is good overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress in speaking, listening. The pupils learn to understand others through speech, signing, symbols, pictures or objects. The very good start they are given with this in the Foundation Stage is built on very carefully throughout the school. By Year 2 pupils use objects of reference or symbols to communicate their choices. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6 as they increase the number of words, symbols, and signs they can confidently use and recognise. Pupils make good progress in reading and pre-reading skills through the school. Their progress is very strong in Year 1 and 2. Texts are used extensively as pupils and teachers share stories and poems. By Year 2 pupils enjoy looking at books and sharing the books with adults. By Year 6 the highest attaining pupils can share in a story, anticipating the events in the story by finding objects of reference or symbols. Some can identify key elements of the story. Most pupils recognise the letters for the days of the week and for their own names. The number of words they know has increased. Pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 where they have good opportunities to develop their mark-making and pre-writing skills. Support for handwriting is stronger than for the expression of ideas, however, and the use of more ICT and symbols for expression, would enhance progress and provision even further. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory as is their progress in handwriting. However, the opportunities for writing are narrow, but are better in English than in other subjects. There is some variation in the way teachers and support staff use systems to support pupils' communication (alternative augmentative communication - AAC), both in expressive and written form.
6. In mathematics, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school has been successful and has had a good effect on pupils' progress. Pupils' progress is good. Pupils with English as an additional language (the majority of pupils) also make good progress because of the multi-sensory approach to the subject and also because every class has a Sylheti speaker.
7. The pupils' achievements in science are good across the whole school from Year 1 to Year 6 and they make good progress. This is because of the way teachers make science interesting by planning activities that enable pupils to think about scientific ideas and try these out practically. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about the subject and they routinely anticipate that they will be investigating, observing, making predictions or carrying out 'tests'. Their understanding of scientific enquiry progresses soundly throughout the school. This area is weaker than their knowledge of science, which is good. Teachers need more guidance as to how they can support this aspect of science.
8. In ICT pupils make good progress. From pupils' records and work seen, the teaching is satisfactory overall and this results in pupils' learning soundly. Pupils build well on their skills developed in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. They use touch screens to draw unaided and use toys, which produce music or sounds when handled in certain ways. Others draw with help, participate in recording messages on Big Mac (a large voice recordable switch operated device). The least able are helped to press switches at appropriate times to secure their involvement in group activities. The most able pupils in Years 3 to 6 use touch screens and use a simple database dictionary to find words. A few pupils select words, symbols or pictures to and produce a sequence of these to write a very simple sentence on the computer.
9. Pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good because it is tied very closely into the pupils' IEPs and also into the personal goals set for them at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 a few pupils indicate that they need to go to the toilet and to feed themselves. They show awareness of self and others and are able to focus on an activity and join in with repetitive group songs and rhymes. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 become more independent. They are able to find their way to the office or dining hall without an adult, are willing to help their teacher or other pupils. In all years, pupils develop clear ideas of right and wrong in their own and others' behaviour. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress because they have the instructions, encouragement and praise spoken in Sylheti as well as English.

10. In art and design, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education pupils' progress is good and they achieve well. Particularly strong features of this are the subject knowledge by teachers and the skill with which they adapt the activities to interest

and meet the particular needs of the pupils. In geography pupils' achievements are very good. Teachers make the activities very relevant and use locality well to enhance pupils' understanding.

### ***Pupils' individual targets and school target setting***

11. The school is very committed to raising pupils' individual levels of achievement and is successful at doing so. A range of assessment information is collected, especially in relation to personal targets, and pupils make very good progress towards these. The school has used the percentage of pupils' IEP targets achieved as a way of raising attainment. Although the headteacher and senior management team recognised that this was not an effective way to target set, it has been building data on pupils' attainment in relation to the 'P' levels achieved, and used pupils' IEPs targets as an interim measure. Plans are underway to look at relevant targets based on the 'P' level data collected. Good practice is beginning to be developed, although more could be done to analyse the data on the achievements of different groups of pupils in the school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

#### Strengths

- Pupils' very positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and staff's sensitive and careful management of behaviour.

#### Areas for improvement

- The independence skills of older pupils.

12. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, just as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop well personally and have very good relationships with one another and staff. Feedback from parents also confirms that this school has a reputation as a caring, happy community where pupils feel secure, behave well and make good progress.
13. The vast majority of pupils are happy to come to school and show signs of pleasure when entering the classroom in the morning. Pupils show high levels of interest in what goes on around them and in the staff who support them. Many pupils have surprising levels of concentration and perseverance, often because of the interesting ways teachers find of engaging their attention. The majority behave very well in lessons and develop respect for their teachers and support staff and each other. They handle the exciting materials used to teach them with care.
14. Any difficult behaviour occurs minimally and is often as a result of anger, fear or distress. It is thoughtfully dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy, which also supports pupils' moral development well. Negative behaviour is immediately responded to and clear messages are signalled to pupils, through by signs, word and body / facial expression that it is inappropriate.
15. Some pupils are highly dependent on adult help but show great trust in all the adults they encounter during the day. This is because of the high level of commitment and care shown by staff. Pupils sometimes have to be introduced to things they initially find upsetting, but because of staff sensitivity they are quickly reassured and comforted. For example, a nursery pupil who initially reacted negatively to touch was observed during a sensory session allowing a variety of textures to be stroked or tapped against his skin, even showing small signs of pleasure.
16. Pupils demonstrate increasing awareness of each other and are encouraged to be kind and to value their classmates. This is achieved, for example, by encouraging groups to celebrate what each individual has tried hard at or achieved and through the sharing of turns, toys and activities. This is, partly, why relationships are so good. Several spontaneous acts of kindness were noted during the inspection where more able pupils went across to help others with simple tasks.

Pupils play and interact together regardless of any differences. Older pupils gradually become more independent, although their opportunities for taking initiative, helping younger pupils and making choices could be even greater. However, pupils of all ages are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves. For example, in Foundation Stage (children in Nursery and Reception) those who can are expected to hang up their coats and get undressed unaided. In Years 1 to 6 pupils are encouraged to take the register and to find their own way to and from the dining hall. Monitors from Year 6 help to set up the hall and participate in the assembly by signing to the rest of the school and handing out materials. The mobility, toileting and feeding programmes are a particular strength of the school. Pupils are continually and systematically helped to achieve independence in these areas.

### **Attendance**

#### Strengths

- School works hard to improve attendance.
- The home school liaison worker has made a very positive impact on attendance rates.

#### Areas for improvement

- Continue to raise the level of attendance.

17. The school has worked hard to bring about an improvement in attendance rates since the last inspection and has reached its first target of 90 per cent. This level of attendance is satisfactory and better than the majority of similar schools in the area. Higher than usual authorised absence is almost entirely due to the extended periods that some pupils have to spend in hospital. There has been a reduction in the level of un-authorised absence in the last year. Punctuality to school is very good due to the very well planned transport arrangements now in place with escorts and carriers.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

#### Strengths

- As a result of the very good teaching and interesting activities, pupils put considerable effort into their work and attend very well.
- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and how to make them meaningful for pupils.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of the specific needs of pupils and have very good skills in meeting the wide range of needs of most of these.
- The work of support staff.

#### Areas for improvement

- Short-term written planning to identify specific outcomes for pupils.
- The use of ICT for communication and writing.

18. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. This is an improvement on the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been improved upon, despite the many changes in school due to the increase in the numbers of pupils, the complexity of their needs, and in staffing. As a result of the very good teaching and interesting activities, pupils put a real effort into their work and try very hard. Overall, this is an excellent feature of their learning.

### ***The quality of teaching across the school***

19. The strongest teaching is found in the Foundation Stage; it is very good in every area of learning. This is because teachers and support staff are highly knowledgeable of the pupils' needs, observe their pupils' responses very well, and are highly effective in communicating with the children to involve them in learning. Assessment is also strong in the Foundation Stage and pupils' progress tracked very carefully. A particular strength is the collaborative planning, although short-term

written planning is not as detailed with specific outcomes identified as it could be. There are similarly strong features in the very good teaching seen in Years 1 and 2, although short-term planning is more limited. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good this is because teachers and support staff generally work well as a team, match the activity or questions well to individual pupils and make learning meaningful and enjoyable. However, at the end of their time in the school the pupils occasionally receive teaching which is not as strong as elsewhere. Although lessons are highly planned in this case, not enough is always expected of pupils, a few pupils are not always gainfully occupied, support staff are not sufficiently involved and explanations are sometimes too complex for pupils' understanding. Teaching is very good for all disabilities, although occasionally pupils with sensory needs could be better included in lessons. However, there is not always enough external support by staff with specialist knowledge to support the teaching of these pupils.

### ***The quality of teaching in subjects***

20. Teaching in English (and of pupils with English as an additional language) is very good with very good story telling by teachers, good collaborative planning between teaching and support staff and the use of interesting and imaginative resources which results in pupils being absorbed in lessons. The promotion of speaking, listening, signing and watching and reading skills is very good. However, the teaching of writing is sound and there is a lack of consistent support for some pupils' communication and writing needs using ICT. In mathematics good teaching results from the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy and from the training provided for the co-ordinator. The teaching of science is good and careful attention is paid to pupils' understanding of key scientific vocabulary and ideas. Teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and focuses well on pupils' IEP targets with teachers and support staff very conscious of these at all times.
21. Teaching is very good in geography and in history in Years 1 and 2; teachers' expectations are high and much practical work, often based in the community, helps pupils gain very good geographical and historical understanding. In art and design, the teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features and teachers provide a very broad range of art experiences for them. In design and technology, history, ICT (judged from pupils' work and records), music, physical education and religious education the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is also good.

### ***The characteristics of the teaching***

22. Teachers have a very good understanding of the specific needs of pupils and have very good skills in meeting the wide range of needs of most of these. Most teachers are extremely committed to providing very interesting experiences to help their pupils learn. In one lesson where the teaching was very good in the Foundation Stage, staff worked extremely well as a team to reinforce mathematical ideas through poems and songs. This kept children with considerable physical disabilities very well on task and alert. Routines such as this and the way staff have planned and practised these are a significant strength and engage pupils very well.
23. Well-planned and thoroughly prepared lessons, in the practical sense, ensure that lessons go smoothly and that all time is used well. However, short-term written planning often lacks the clear learning outcomes for individual pupils or groups seen in the medium-term planning. The planning of activities for different pupils and groups in lessons, however, is very clear and work is well matched. Adopting a more systematic approach to identifying what teachers' expect pupils to learn would sharpen assessment and ensure pupils learn even more effectively. It would also help them be more aware of what they are learning and better support their independence in doing so.
24. Overall teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. A very strong feature is the way teachers make learning fun and provide activities that have very strong subject content, yet often explore difficult ideas in a very simple way. For examples, in one Year 6 science lesson, taught by the deputy headteacher, a very good approach using models and pupils' photographs led pupils to gain a greater understanding of light and dark / day and night.



25. Teachers are usually very good at including all pupils in their lessons and matching work for their needs. This enables pupils to learn very well. There are a few weaknesses relating to the inclusion of pupils with sensory needs, although this is inconsistent and very good practice was also observed. For example, a blind pupil gained a very good sense of 'pull and push' forces when she was a member of a tug-o-war team in science. Teachers generally use very well graded questions to check pupils' understanding and provide well-timed and individual prompts or cues to help the pupil to give their answer.
26. Teachers know how to really stimulate pupils' interest and learning. They ensure that lessons contain a wide variety of activities, which are frequently changed, and which build upon each other. This results in good progress within the lesson and over time. A variety of ways to help the pupils learn is used. This includes the use of ICT although occasionally more use of ICT by teachers, for instance, for modelling ideas, could help pupils learn better. The pace of lessons is mostly swift, and this plus the motivating materials helps keep pupils' attending, despite the fact that many have identified difficulties in this area. Activities are very well organised and are made relevant and enjoyable. Lessons start on time and because of very good preparation with equipment made ready, the maximum amount of time is used for teaching and learning. This is done very well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
27. A strength of teaching is the teachers' aim for all pupils to make responses during lessons. Where this is done particularly well, there is good use of signing and symbols to support learning and communication. At times, however, the support for this is inconsistent and, occasionally with older pupils, not enough is expected in the way of verbal responses for those who are capable. The school is good at teaching routines and helping pupils follow the sequence of the day. This is well promoted through the use of symbol timetables. A good start has been made in using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and some teachers use Big Mack switches well to enable pupils to respond, for example in 'Hello' sessions at the beginning of the day. However, more use could be made of ICT to support pupils' 'verbal' responses, through using simple communication aids and software to help them 'write' their ideas.
28. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good indeed. Trust and mutual respect are clearly evident throughout the school and teachers and support staff are very good role models in this respect. The very good relationships result in almost all pupils behaving well and trying very hard with their work. Pupils respond very positively when they are required to pay attention and if there are difficulties teachers are usually consistent in following any behaviour plan for a particular pupil. All staff are particularly good at providing feedback to pupils as to how well they are doing, and what is good about their work. This means pupils' work and achievements are celebrated meaningfully and often. As a result they are keen to get on, listen carefully to their teachers' suggestions and take pride in what they are doing.
29. Most teachers use every opportunity across lessons to reinforce emerging literacy and numeracy skills; for example, in a physical education lesson pupils practiced counting as they jumped up and down in the pool. In another instance, pupils were naming colours. In literacy lessons counting is again be reinforced. In some subjects, however, they could use more ways of helping pupils to write about or record their learning, for example through the use of ICT or symbols. Many teachers use digital photography very well to help pupils record and recall their experiences.
30. The school's support assistants are a highly skilled group of staff who understand the learning, communication and physical needs of pupils very well. They make a very positive contribution to teaching and learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork between support staff and teachers. They use their initiative very well and seize on opportunities to support and guide pupils. They do this appropriately, although occasionally teachers do not give enough direction to less skilled support staff. Support assistants are particularly effective when they know what is in the lesson plan, and they are clear about their role. Occasionally, in whole class part of lessons their skills

are not always effectively used, although very good examples of their use for observation and assessment, or for modelling the required behaviour to pupils were seen.

31. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and takes many forms. In some cases this is 'traditional' homework where pupils complete work in relation to mathematics or English. In others, it is learning symbols or signs or taking home toys from the toy library which are linked to the topic studied. A small number of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire

were not clear on whether their children had enough, although there was not dissatisfaction. There is a very clear draft policy on homework, which should clearly explain to parents what home-based activities actually constitute 'homework'.

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

### *Pupils' opportunities for learning*

#### Strengths

- The curriculum for Nursery and Reception pupils is very good.
- There is a very broad range of learning opportunities outside lessons.
- Equality of opportunity for all pupils.

#### Areas for improvement

- The clarity of what is intended to be learned in schemes of work.

32. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided are good. There are significant strengths in the provision outside lessons, and the school works very hard, and is very successful, at making the activities relevant, especially for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, and in involving the community. The strongly relevant activities help pupils understand better what they are doing and aid them to learn more effectively.
33. Since the last inspection, when there were significant weaknesses in the school's curriculum, there has been sound improvement. The school's curriculum continues to be a developing one. The curriculum for the whole school supports the aims of the school well and is highly relevant in relation to pupils' individual needs. The Foundation Stage (for Nursery and Reception children) curriculum for children under the age of six, is very good, because of the way it is informed by the six areas of learning and the detailed knowledge and understanding staff have of individual children's learning needs and how to adapt the curriculum for them. This enables teachers to plan accurately for pupils' needs.
34. All statutory requirements are fully met. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and now have a co-ordinator and a policy for each subject, together with schemes of work which are more closely linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. However, not all schemes of work have been up-dated following the new National Curriculum guidance in 2000, they do not all have clearly identified learning objectives and are not detailed enough to protect the pupils' progress and continuity of experiences in subjects as they move through the school. Staff consult and share ideas with each other and so the curriculum is well balanced, but there is a need for more detail in schemes of work throughout the school and in many teacher's medium and short-term planning. In addition, there is too much autonomy allowed to class teachers in the construction of their own timetables resulting, for example, in some pupils spending unequal amounts of time on religious education.
35. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented, giving a range and quality to planned literacy and mathematical experiences for all pupils. There is a good communication strategy in place, which uses signs, symbols, touch and speech. It is very

effective when it is used consistently and systematically by staff and support staff, but on occasions its use is irregular. In addition, opportunities are missed for the use of computer technology or a range of communication aids to support pupils' expression further. These need to be more systematically built into curriculum planning.

36. The programme of lunchtime activities provides excellent learning opportunities for pupils. The feeding programme is very well planned giving maximum opportunity for personal development. A particular strength of the curriculum is the excellent range of creative and well-supervised outdoor activities that the pupils enjoy. They move between a wide range of learning experiences, which are exciting and stimulating. All their senses are engaged and they have

enormous fun, whether they are listening to a story tape or musical chimes, wandering around objects of varying textures or just simply playing under the numerous colourful canopies which shelter the activities from the weather.

37. The school has worked hard to provide activities after school and during holidays, often in conjunction with other groups. Funding is steadfastly sought for this and the school has a strong commitment to providing a wide range of learning experiences outside lessons. Although the bus regime limits after some school activities, there are some clubs for parents and pupils, such as the swimming club. Older pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a residential experience of outdoor activities.

### ***Links with business and the community***

#### Strengths

- The school understands the value of the community and links are very strong.
- The school now has very strong relationships with many businesses.
- Good links in place with local secondary special school.

#### Areas for improvement

- The need for a clearly defined role for the school in supporting outreach into mainstream schools.

38. The school has developed very good links with its local community and has now built up a very good partnership with many local businesses. This is an improvement on the last inspection and the links allow a two-way benefit. The community now provides a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils make numerous visits to local places of interest such as the shops, library and Docklands Light Railway. They have also made visits to places much further afield and have enjoyed explored the beach at Chalkwell or going to the Science Museum or London Zoo. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have also enjoyed a residential camp in Sevenoaks and the many exciting activities they experienced had a very positive impact on their personal development. Community visitors include 'Postman Pat', the London Child's Flower Society and representatives from many businesses. The school links all these activities clearly into the curriculum and they have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and development. The development of business links since the last inspection has resulted in very generous financial donations being given to the school. A good example of how the pupils contribute to the community is through the design of posters for the Tower Hamlets Police Consultative Group. Many other local firms and charities also support the school and donate money for other aspects of school life. The school has also developed good and effective links with a few mainstream schools, where pupils are included or Stephen Hawking staff support pupils on outreach. The school would wish to have more extensive links with mainstream schools but is currently restricted by funding and the need to support pupils' complex needs within its own establishment. There are strong links with other special schools such as Beatrice Tate, the school to which most pupils transfer in September.

### ***Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development***

#### Strengths

- The ability of staff to recognise and celebrate special moments which support pupils' spiritual development very well.
- The wide variety of cultural experiences available to pupils.
- The development of pupils' independence, particularly in regard to feeding, mobility and toileting.
- The clear guidance on and excellent control of behaviour and the support for moral development.

Areas for improvement

- The development of responsibility and initiative.
- 'Planned' activities with a spiritual focus.

39. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Overall, the provision is very good with some excellent features.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. There is planned provision of very well thought out cycle of multi-faith assemblies. These help pupils to think and reflect on life through stories and events from different religions as well as to support their cultural understanding. The predominant religions of Islam and Christianity are celebrated at Eid and Christmas respectively with large assemblies open to all friends of the school. The focus on role-play and drama at these times, helps pupils understand better the ideas presented as well as to think what these mean for them. There are regular assemblies to celebrate success where no pupil is left out and pupils' birthdays are made special with singing and cards. These occasions contribute very well to pupils' confidence and feelings of self-worth. Bereavement assemblies take place when a pupil has died.
41. There are many spiritual moments that happen spontaneously during the day. These can occur in any lesson and are a result of the staff's total commitment to the well being and progress of the pupils. For instance, there is often a look of joy on an adult's face, mirrored by the expression of the pupil, when he or she manages a response which has not before been possible. The harmony, humour and complete respect for individual needs which characterised the best lessons seen, also supports pupils' spiritual development very well. The majority of spiritual experiences are spontaneous rather than planned; this means that in a few classes staff do not recognise these opportunities, and spiritual elements are not always capitalised upon.
42. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Relationships within the school are very good and staff are always courteous, greeting visitors with a smile. This positive atmosphere helps to shape pupils' behaviour and moral development. Staff give clear guidance to pupils on how to behave, both as role models and by their reaction to unacceptable behaviour. The school's policy is that all behaviours have meaning and should be understood as expressions of mood, rather than dismissed as deliberate disruption. Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded at all times of the day, by praise, by using the star system, by highlighting achievement in the end-of-day session.
43. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school emphasises social development in its personal, social education programme and all pupils have targets on their IEPs, which are designed to promote their independence. The staff are very good role models in the way they work together, value each other, listen to others' opinions and share tasks. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the school focuses on developing communication using a range of sensory cues. These help pupils to progressively communicate their needs, to anticipate events through structured routines and to acknowledge others in their vicinity. These routines enable the more able pupils to develop an awareness of the effects of their actions. They are encouraged to relate to others in their group and gradually to become responsible for their own actions when working or playing with others. There is an emphasis in lessons on sharing, fairness and taking turns and these ideas are reinforced by assemblies, by giving gifts to the elderly at harvest time and during structured outdoor play. There are good social opportunities when visiting children from local playgroups and primary schools work alongside the pupils and when return visits are made to the primary schools. Although a few pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, and the school's *Independence Targets* include group work, these are both areas which are not as well developed as they could be.

44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent. The school takes every opportunity to help pupils appreciate the richness and variety of their own and other cultures. The school environment reflects the diverse community it serves. The staff's richness and variety of backgrounds benefits the school. Pupils have role models from their own and other communities and access to the curriculum through their first language. At key times of the year, parents and friends come in to bring particular festivals or occasions to life. Pupils experience the costumes, songs, foods, smells and movements. A wide range of traditional British stories, rhymes and music are used as well as those from other cultures. Two and three-dimensional art uses techniques from around the world. The curriculum is enriched for pupils by visits to local mosques and churches and projects with local artists and musicians. The school has strong links with the community and uses feedback from minority ethnic support groups to judge its success. Parents are very supportive and involved with the school. They add much to pupils' cultural understandings. Parents come into school for all sorts of occasions and the

parent workshops are very well attended. A recent workshop was teaching mothers how to do beautiful traditional embroidery which their ancestors would have been taught as children but which had nearly died out.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

### *The school's pastoral care and welfare*

#### Strengths

- Very good support for pupils' emotional and physical care by school staff, especially for the pupils with the most complex medical needs.
- Good procedures in place for fire, first aid, and accident recording.
- Very good supervision at lunch and in playground and help from midday and support staff.
- Very good procedures in place for child protection.
- School promotes and monitors attendance very well and the monitoring and promotion of behaviour is also very good.

#### Areas for improvement

- Governors' involvement in health and safety issues, especially monitoring.

45. The school provides good care and support for its pupils overall and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. The support provided for the emotional and physical needs of pupils is very good and this level of care is underpinned by the very good knowledge that staff have of pupils and the very high quality of relationships that exist in school. From the moment that pupils arrive in school they receive the highest level of care and support from all members of staff and those specialist visitors who come into school on a regular basis to care for them. A very good example of this high quality of care was when the occupational therapist visited a classroom, at the request of a teacher, to finely adjust the settings on a chair to provide maximum back and head support for a pupil. The staff very strongly and consistently follow therapists' advice, particularly about seating and positioning. This means that pupils are placed in the optimum positions for learning. The procedures for child protection are now very good and the school has addressed the key issue from the previous inspection with the publication of its child protection policy. The school also maintains well the appropriate records for fire drills, accident recording and investigation and the emergency contact of family and friends in case of an emergency.
46. The governing body is enthusiastic in its approach towards health and safety and the premises committee receives regular reports on safety in school. It also ensures its awareness of accidents in school by monitoring the accident book. The school should now develop more thorough procedures that include governors in the termly health and safety inspections and ensure that their findings are formally recorded.

47. The school supervises pupils very well at lunchtime and in the playground. The midday supervisors, classroom support staff and the nursery nurses are a very effective and important part of the school 'family'.
  
48. The school promotes and monitors attendance very well. Tracking and monitoring of statistics takes place on a regular basis. The home school liaison officer plays a very important part in this process and she has a very good understanding of the individual problems of pupils and their backgrounds. The school also promotes and monitors behaviour very well through the very effective provision of moral development and the way that teachers and support staff manage it. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good and are underpinned by the very high quality of relationships and the knowledge that all staff have of the pupils.

## **Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance and support for pupils' special educational needs**

### Strengths

- Day-to-day observation and records and informal monitoring are strong.
- Teachers use their assessments well to adapt their lesson planning.
- Strong assessment procedures and very strong use of the information gained in the Foundation Stage.

### Areas for improvement

- Consistency in subjects of assessing pupils' outcomes in the medium-term and the ability of the school to evaluate pupils' overall progress.
- Reporting in subjects other than English, and mathematics is sometimes too descriptive.
- Restricted therapists' time and lack of specialist support for pupils with sensory needs.

49. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in improving its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are sound. The use of the information gained from these and from specialist assessments is good and particularly well used in to inform pupils' IEP targets. Assessment procedures are strongest for those aspects related to pupils' IEPs targets or in relation to their specific special educational needs – for example, in relation to communication, personal or physical targets. There continues to be a strong assessment policy in place and clear guidelines to staff as to what should be collected, when and how. The school works hard to keep itself informed of new developments in assessment and recording practices and carefully considers the ways it should amend its own practice. This sometimes means that the pace of development in some subjects has been slow, however. Although there are strong systems in place for monitoring pupils' attainment and achievements in areas such as the Foundation Stage and English, assessment and monitoring is still too imprecise in some subjects such as, for example history, geography, ICT, physical education and science. In most subjects the school has plans to revise and develop its approach, using the 'P' levels or similar data.
50. There is also scope for the school to use the information it currently collects more specifically to target areas of learning in subjects or to compare groups, as well as to plot individual progress. These weaknesses in formal assessment and monitoring are off-set to some extent by the deep understanding that individual staff have of pupils' needs and the ways in which many teachers track and evaluate the day-to-day responses of pupils to their learning experiences. However, pupils could make even more progress in some subjects, such as religious education and music, if assessment and monitoring systems were more secure and more consistently used to inform teachers' planning. The school and individual co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop this and it is part of current development planning.
51. Overall, the procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements on entry to the school are good. They are very thorough, detailed and cover important areas such as social, emotional, physical, independence and communication development. Assessment procedures and the use of them are strong in the Nursery and Reception years and have some very good features. Staff there are very active in taking on-board new developments and have shown a great deal of initiative in the procedures they are developing further. However, it is essential that these dovetail easily into the whole school system of 'P' levels to ensure that there is no ambiguity around exactly where children are and what they need to achieve next.
52. Throughout the school there is good use of photographic records and independence targets/records to exemplify pupils' achievements and experiences; communicative and personal and social development is generally tracked very well through the IEP system and through the joint work with therapists. Staff work very hard to incorporate into their lessons aspects of the pupils' IEPs, as well as any specific subject targets identified. Targets in IEPs are reviewed annually and re-set as an outcome of the child's Annual Review and parents are appropriately consulted in relation to these. Most targets are of good quality, although some are too broad and

ongoing. Progress towards targets is reviewed termly and parents are given opportunities to be involved in these meetings and suggest revisions should they wish to.

53. The schools' procedures and practices relating to Annual Review of pupils' Statements of Educational Needs and for transition planning for the next stage of their education and life are good and meet statutory requirements. Parents and other professionals/key workers are appropriately involved and their views sought. Their contributions are aided by the ready availability of staff for discussion, the use of the home-school worker and the school's willingness to home-visit and re-arrange meetings if necessary.
54. In subjects such as mathematics and English, pupils' individual progress is monitored very well against their individual targets but there is, as in other subjects, some inconsistency in teachers' use of the assessment procedures. For example, not all records are dated, the context in which pupils' work was gained and the children's current National Curriculum or 'P' level is not always indicated. This makes it difficult for some pupils' rate of progress to be effectively monitored.
55. A recent development has been for the deputy headteacher to compile a summary statement with exemplars at the end of Year 2, in conjunction with teachers. This is a good development and if extended should mean that children's overall development and levels are more accessible to teachers than the working through the successive IEP proformas that currently are in place.
56. The majority of staff throughout the school record or recognise informally pupil outcomes well at the end of lessons on a daily basis and modify their planning and teaching, as necessary. However, formal systems for monitoring what has been taught and learned over each the term in National Curriculum subjects is variable. Although end of key stage assessments are being carried out, the school recognises the need for more in-depth analysis of subject standards and pupil achievements in some subjects by class teachers and subject co-ordinators.
57. Teachers and support staff provide very good support and advice for all pupils, in relation to their efforts, what is good about their work and how they could improve it even more. All staff give caring and sensitive support to all pupils. The school makes very good use of the sometimes limited support of outside agencies in the assessment of pupils' individual teaching and learning needs. The school's behaviour policy clearly states what is good practice and outlines the procedures for physical intervention when necessary.
58. The school works effectively with a range of therapists including speech and language therapists and integrates the results of these specialist assessments into the pupils' programmes well. However, there is very restricted therapist time in relation to the provision set out in pupils' Statement of Special Educational Need, particularly to support pupils' complexity of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy needs or from specialists relating to the pupils' hearing and visual needs. The school has recognised this and is trying to negotiate for more support with the relevant health and local education authority personnel.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

### Strengths

- The home-school liaison worker works closely with parents to involve them in school.
- Parents have very positive views of school.
- Support staff have strong relationships with parents.

### Areas for improvement

- The amount of educational terminology and the presentation of reports to make for ease of reading for parents.

59. The school promotes itself very well to its parents and those who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting have very positive views about all aspects of school life. Parents



hold Stephen Hawking School in very high esteem and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. All those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their children like school, their children are making good progress in school and that teaching is good. There were no areas of any significant disagreement.

60. Very effective links have now been developed with parents and the home school liaison worker has made a very positive impact on this partnership. Parents support their children's learning very well, as a result. They also contribute well to school life through being invited to such things as activity workshops where they learn embroidery, Makaton signs or about child development. This builds their confidence to come into school and assist in class. Attendance at celebration assemblies is very good with between 30 and 40 parents and family members attending. The Stephen Hawking School Trust is a charitable organisation that runs with the support of parents and the business community. This trust is the school's formal fund raising organisation. Parents are very supportive of the school and for instance, the summer fair and this event often raises in excess of £2000. The school places a very high value on all this support and it has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
61. The information produced by the school for its parents is good overall. It is strongest in relation to the attractive and informative newsletters sent home on a regular basis. They always include special things to celebrate, such as 100 per cent attendance records. The school also ensures that important documents are translated into Bengali so that all parents can access appropriate information. Termly reports are generally informative, and parents like those containing photographs very much. However, occasionally, a few parents find the reports difficult to understand, as they contain a 'dense' amount of text and some have a great deal of educational jargon.
62. The quality of the Annual Review report, which also forms the annual report for parents, is generally good, particularly where reporting relates to the main subjects and to pupils' IEP targets. For these, examples are clear as to what pupils know, can do and understand and progress since last year is clearly identified by most teachers. However, reporting about pupils' progress in other subjects, such as history, design and technology, physical education and geography is only just satisfactory. It is too often a description of what pupils have experienced or activities they have carried out, rather than an assessment of progress and does not provide evidence for parents in all subjects of exactly how children have progressed in their skills and understanding.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### *Leadership and management*

#### Strengths

- The good leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team.
- The day-to-day management of the school is very good and the headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other's skills well.
- The 'can do' and 'inclusive' culture within the school and the way staff feel included in decision-making.
- Effective teamwork and very good staff morale with a very strong shared commitment to improve.

#### Areas for improvement

- The prioritisation and speed with which some actions take place.
- Success criteria in action planning.
- The monitoring of all aspects of the school's work by governors and the formal recording of all their work.
- Co-ordinators' roles in monitoring their subjects need extending.
- The use of performance data for examining trends and patterns in the progress of different groups.

63. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other's skills well and the deputy headteacher is very supportive and instrumental in also ensuring that the school runs efficiently. Day-to-day management is very good and the headteacher leads the school well. Senior staff also lead well by example and have been rigorous in ensuring that the quality of teaching has been maintained and improved upon since the last inspection, especially as staff numbers have increased, together with the complexity of pupils' needs. They, together with the governors, have a vision for the school that provides a clear educational direction that is well reflected in the school's aims and is evident in the school's work. For instance, the school is strongly committed to providing educational opportunities in other settings and every year a small number of pupils move from nursery to mainstream school. Similarly, opportunities are provided for pupils to attend local schools with support from Stephen Hawking staff. The school would like to do more, but is hampered by a lack of funding and formal agreement on a system for this with the local education authority.
64. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very strong collaborative and consultative approach to the management of the school. This ensures that everyone feels valued within the school. However, they take decisive and more independent action where necessary, for instance, when weak teaching is identified. Views of staff, governors and parents are sought and there are ways of considering the views of pupils. All ideas are carefully considered before making decisions and are very reflective in their practice. They are strong on ensuring that 'teamwork' figures very strongly in the school's approach. As a result, staff feel included as part of the decision making process and staff morale is high. The commitment to providing interesting and exciting ways of helping pupils to learn and to whole school improvement is very strong. This is why the teaching is very good and the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, is interesting and is relevant.
65. Although there is very much a 'can do' and 'inclusive' culture, to all aspects of the school's work, a few important actions have taken too long to achieve and some timelines get missed. The policy for English and a number of schemes of work are not yet fully in place, been revised in the light of the new Curriculum 2000 or take account of the new curriculum guidance for special schools. Some schemes are not due to be revised for a number of years. For instance, English, mathematics and science schemes were due to be updated in 2000. At present, there is no policy to guide English (although a communication policy is in place) and schemes for science and mathematics are not planned for revision until 2003 and 2005 respectively. Literacy planning has recently been revised but does not include enough focus on writing. The current planning for many subjects is insufficiently detailed and lacks specific outcomes for different groups of pupils; some planning is based on old programmes of study. Teachers recognise this and do their utmost to make up for the deficiencies by sharing, discussing and using other sources to enhance their planning and teaching.
66. A suitable, relevant school development plan for the last academic year was produced which ended in July 2002. Another, updated plan has been produced following consultation with staff and governors at the beginning of September and runs to 2003. Most actions planned are short-term, although the review of subjects is over four years. The plan provides a broad outline to take the school forward relating to whole school issues and subject co-ordinators are expected to provide more detail with regard to their own subject action plans. These vary considerably from lists of 'things to do' in a subject, to others which have clear objectives, with stated outcomes and success criteria. There is a lack of 'sharp' criteria, especially in relation to pupil outcomes in whole school development planning. This makes it difficult for the school to fully evaluate its success from year-to-year. However, each year this exercise is carried out in consultation with a group of governors and staff. Reviews do provide broad, but useful, evaluations of the school's work, both from year-to-year and over the longer term. For example, this has recently included a five year review, regarding the governors' strategic planning for the school. Although the school 'reflects' well on how it can improve, this work would be better focussed and evaluation sharper, if more specific criteria were set.

67. The support offered by the governing body is satisfactory. It has been strong in shaping the general direction of the school and the chair of governors has been particularly instrumental in this process. Governors view their vision for the school as their strongest asset. Meetings are held regularly, although attendance and recruitment of governors has been problematic until recently. Most work has been done by governors as a whole body, as it has not been possible to form committees through a lack of governors. However, there has been a finance committee in place over the past year, very much linked to the budgetary issues the school needed to monitor. Other committees, such as a curriculum and pupil committee and a pay and personnel committee have recently been formed with clear terms of reference.
68. Governors receive reports from the LEA and the school and meet their statutory duties satisfactorily. As a result of this, and some monitoring by governors, such as observing lessons, they have a good knowledge of the main strengths of the school, such as the quality of teaching and the ways teachers make learning interesting. Their knowledge of where the school needs to improve is more limited, however; for instance, there is little understanding of curriculum issues or matters, as this receives little attention in the governors' work. Not all the governors' work is recorded in the minutes of their meetings. Discussions with governors indicated that they are more involved in the school's work than is recorded formally and are acting as a critical friend to the school.
69. Overall, the school monitors its work well and takes effective action when improvement needs to be made. The school has implemented a good system for performance management review of teachers in accordance with national guidance. Consideration has been given to introduce a similar system for other staff. The process is well focussed on meeting the school's priorities of raising standards and observation of teaching systematically takes place by team leaders as part of this. Monitoring of teaching by subject co-ordinators has begun and they have been well supported in this by the senior management team. A programme for lesson observation is well established and a rigorous observation schedule is in place for the senior management team. There is a very good knowledge of teachers' individual strengths and weaknesses and support is put in place when issues arise, for example, when, and if, teachers need 'coaching'. Co-ordinators now need to extend their monitoring of standards in their subjects and teachers' planning. Most subjects have portfolios of a range of assessed work / work samples and individual pupil portfolios do show how pupils make progress over time. The school has been involved in collecting data on the assessments it has made on pupils (using 'P' levels) and has participated in a national project to look at pupils' progress. It has a range of data that it uses in a broad way such as comparing the progress of pupils with SLD with those with PMLD. However, it could usefully extend this to examine trend and patterns, for instance relating to boys and girls and different ethnic groups.

### ***Staffing, accommodation and learning resources***

#### **Strengths**

- The physical and academic needs of the pupils are met well by sufficient, well qualified teaching staff and the very good numbers of support staff.
- Accommodation is very good overall - classrooms are large and airy and a range of smaller rooms provides space for specialist teaching and therapy. The hydrotherapy pool and outside areas are significant strengths.
- The good range and amount of learning resources are of high quality. They are easily accessible and used efficiently.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Restricted space for the storage of wheelchairs and walking aids and poor acoustics in some areas.

70. There is a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of pupils and the requirements of the curriculum. Responsibilities are generally well matched to their backgrounds and expertise. The school has been successful in retaining staff and in recruiting new staff during its rapid expansion.

71. Teaching staff are very well supported by the very good number of support staff and therapists who contribute so significantly to the learning and care of pupils. The school has been particularly successful in recruiting support staff from within the local community. These represent a good ethnic mix and provide very good support. The school and pupils benefit, in particular, from the encouragement and skills they bring to the school.
72. Through the strong induction programme and through the care and support for each other, staff quickly become familiar with the school's aims and routines. The efficiency and flexibility of staff such as midday supervisory assistants and administrative staff not only helps to ensure the smooth running of the school but contribute to pupils' personal, social and communication development. The highly effective home-school liaison worker has been successful in extending the already very good links that exist between the parents and school.
73. The school provides a good range of professional development and training opportunities that are open to all staff. For example, a group of 15 support assistants have recently obtained the Certificate for Special Needs Assistants, a national award. Training is well focused on the needs of the individual as well as on the needs of the institution. Training is mainly linked to the school improvement plan, but aspects are linked to performance management as well as for teachers' / support staff's own professional development. A high proportion of training is related to medical and care issues with fewer opportunities for subject based training. The school is keen to support the further development of subject co-ordinators through appropriate subject training.
74. Accommodation is very good. The excellent maintenance of this architectural award winning building has helped retain its freshness and is a credit to the site manager and his staff. The increasing numbers of pupils with more complex needs has meant that storage of wheelchairs and mobility aids restricts the width of some corridors. The school has responded well to the changing needs and has adapted a few rooms accordingly. However, acoustics in a few rooms, including the hall, are poor. This poses a problem for those with hearing impairment and other pupils with attending and listening difficulties. Overall, however, pupils benefit from light, spacious classrooms and the provision of small number of specialist rooms for practical subjects such as music and design and technology. There is good provision for therapy, a very good quality sensory room and a high quality hydrotherapy pool that contributes significantly to good learning in swimming. An outstanding feature of the site is the school's imaginative use of the restricted outside area. Two playgrounds provide exercise and challenge for more mobile pupils. In addition, the space outside each classroom 'comes alive' at lunch times. Tented areas with rugs and cushions on the ground enable all pupils to explore stimulating sensory experiences. Plans for covering an outside area for the youngest children are well advanced.
75. The pupils' learning is well supported by the good range and quality of resources. These are particularly well chosen to engage the interest of the high number of younger pupils and to support practical subjects such as physical education and design and technology. Staff show imagination and perseverance in adapting and creating a wide range of supplementary resources to meet the group and individual needs of pupils. Very good storage and labelling ensures their efficient use. The local area is used particularly well as a resource to support learning in a number of subjects as well as to promote social development.

### ***The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning***

#### Strengths

- Day-to-day financial management is very good.
- The school development plan is well costed.

#### Areas for improvement

- The criteria by which the school will measure success and cost effectiveness of its actions are not always clear enough.
- The detail on how progress will be monitored to make sure the improvement plan is working.

76. The school's strategic use of its resources is good. The school's funding is slightly less than that of similar schools but uses all its funding very well indeed. It is also somewhat disadvantaged financially, because it is growing in size with funding that is based on the previous year's enrolment. Consequently, it has carefully thought out how it can best maximise staff resources and as a result has increased its number of support staff. Great effort has gone into training and support so that pupils' progress also maximised.
77. The school is careful with its resources and has improved its monitoring following a problem last year when a considerable amount income tax failed to be deducted by the school's contracted payroll service. The weaknesses listed in the 1999 audit have all been remedied. Governors have now set up a committee to monitor school finances more effectively and to avoid problems such as this. Governors and school staff are now rigorous and vigilant in their checking on income and expenditure, are able to identify potential under or overspend and ensure that the procedures laid out in the school's *Financial Management Code of Practice* are followed. Day-to-day financial management is now very good, due to a reliable electronic system of tracking expenditure and the increased knowledge, expertise and confidence of the deputy head and the senior administration officer.
78. Sums of money provided by the government for specific projects have been carefully spent; with their information and communication technology funding the school looked for and identified a training package which was relevant to the needs of the pupils at Stephen Hawking School. The impact of such grant is considered well. For example, the home-school liaison worker (funded from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant) has completed a review to measure the impact of her work with parents and the grants for Literacy and Numeracy are beginning to improve the teaching and progress in these two areas.
79. The improved attention, interest and progress observed where pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have one-to-one support confirms that the decision to pay for high levels of support staff was an effective one.
80. The school development plan is discussed at teacher meetings and focuses well on national priorities and the particular needs of the school. It is agreed by the governing body and all the actions within it are well costed. Subject co-ordinators have costed plans for their subjects and sums are allocated on the basis of school priorities. However, the procedures for reviewing spending decisions and evaluating their impact are informal and not subject to scrutiny as they do not appear in the governors' minutes. For example, the decision to increase the technician's days of employment was made without a formal assessment of the impact of the existing two days. Furthermore, the current 2002/2003 development plan does not always have clear success criteria and it makes it difficult to evaluate outcomes or cost effectiveness. The previous plan is better in parts but, overall, there is little in terms of specific outcomes related to pupils' achievement and quantitative measures for success.
81. The school uses the principles of best value satisfactorily. It has done some comparison of funding with other schools, but the ones chosen were not particularly similar and so valid conclusions could not be drawn. The school rose to the challenge of finding a school meals provider who would cook Halal food and provide it in liquidised form for pupils with feeding problems, by setting up its own kitchens. It is now in a position to offer a meals service to other schools with similar pupils. The school makes efforts to ensure that its financial decisions represent good value. For example, the premises manager does research to find the best provider for gas, electricity and water and different suppliers are considered for large purchases. Decisions are increasingly reached as a result of consultation. Parents are being consulted more often as their involvement with the school has increased.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

82. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

(1) Ensure that there is rigour, pace and focus in relation to

- whole school development planning and for subjects – especially, the setting of timelines and the meeting deadlines for actions and the identifying of clear criteria for success so that school, subject leaders and governors can assess the impact of actions and their cost-effectiveness;
- providing more detailed short and medium-term planning– so that it is clear what the learning outcomes are for pupils in lesson plans, how these relate to the expectations for pupils in the medium-term and that there is an up-to-date programme of study based on the National Curriculum 2000 and that takes into account other national guidance;
- the work of governors – that they undertake all their responsibilities fully, including overseeing the curriculum, and record properly the outcomes of their work in the minutes of meetings;
- the assessment and the collection of data - that all the data the school collects is used effectively for modifying teachers' planning, their programmes for individuals and groups and for whole school target setting to raise standards\*;

(2) Improve pupils' writing, particularly in Years 3 to 6, by ensuring

- all staff fully understand what constitutes 'writing' for pupils with SLD /PMLD;
- a policy for writing (as part of the English policy) identifies clearly how writing should be promoted;
- opportunities for writing are built into to teachers' planning in the long, medium and short-term and are directly related to a programme of study which is part of the National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy;
- information and communication technology is used sufficiently to provide increased ways of writing for pupils;
- the co-ordinator for English monitors and evaluates the promotion of writing through the school and across subjects.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- *ensuring the consistency of use of signs, symbols and objects of reference and that a wider range of ways of using ICT to support communication are used\**;
- *ensuring advice, guidance and skills about pupils with sensory / physical /communication needs are passed onto school staff through regular visits by specialists and therapists and agreed programmes of support to the school with the relevant authorities\**.

\* recognised by the school and identified in the school development plan

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	33	33	16	0	0	0
Percentage	9	36	36	17	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	84
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	63

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.80

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.01

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

## Attainment at the end

Too few pupils took the National Curriculum tests or award bearing examinations to report their results.

## 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	9	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	31	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## Teachers and classes

## Financial information

### Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	8.4

### Education support staff: YN– Y6

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	824

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001-02
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Total income	1,210,717
Total expenditure	1,355,654
Expenditure per pupil	16,946*
Balance brought forward from previous year	144,945*
Balance carried forward to next year	8



*\*These are artificially inflated figures for 2001-2002 as the payroll did not deduct staff income tax for part of the year, thus leaving the school for a surplus which has now been repaid. The expenditure per pupil is more in the region of £14000 and balances are on target to be much healthier in 2003.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	84
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	94	6	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	27	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	21	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	38	3	0	10
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	21	0	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	6	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	18	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	79	15	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	91	6	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	82	12	0	0	6

## 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

The school's provision for the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

#### Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching and the way the staff know their children so well through the detailed assessments made.
- The emphasis on preparing those children for whom mainstream school placement is appropriate and the support given to mainstream staff.
- The richness and variety of the curriculum.
- The care that staff have for children.

#### Areas for improvement

- The detail of the planning, especially to help new or replacement staff.
- How the system for assessment is tied into whole school assessment, to enable continuity of records and monitoring of progress.

83. The school has four classes within the Foundation Stage provision. It has a large number of Nursery children (aged 2, 3 and 4) and a smaller group of children in the Reception class (who are or will become five years of age during the school year). The school nursery takes in very young children for intensive support and assessment, with an intention of supporting their inclusion in mainstream schools, wherever possible by school age. It has been particularly successful in doing this and in working in partnership with other schools to achieve a placement.
84. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching and progress of children under the age of five was judged as mainly very good. Children within the Foundation Stage continue to make very good progress from their starting points across all the six areas of learning that form part of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They make particularly strong progress in communication, language and early literacy and in personal and social education. This is because of the excellent teamwork between teachers and support staff and the careful monitoring of the children's responses to the learning activities that they have. The curriculum, teaching and provision for children's care and welfare are also very good and have continued to take very good account of national and local education authority guidance. A very strong assessment and recording system for experiences and for children's development is being developed in conjunction with Tower Hamlets guidance and a past teacher of the school. There is, however, a need to ensure that it fits readily into assessment frameworks that are used elsewhere in the school and that information can be systematically built up and that short- and medium-term planning by teachers is more detailed and consistent.
85. Children enter the school with low or very low levels of attainment. The richness of the learning opportunities offered, the careful use of routines and of activities that engage children's interest and the very good teaching enable almost all children to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual programmes. Children quickly feel safe, secure and valued in this environment because of the very strong support, care and concern provided by all staff. This encourages them to 'have a go' at new experiences they might initially find threatening and, because they trust their teachers, they do so, enjoying the sense of achievement when they succeed. During the inspection a number of children were 'settling into the nursery environment' and many were attending for the first time. In every case this was being managed very well by staff and very well supported by parents and carers. The nursery links with parents, both through their own work and that of the home-school worker, are exceptional and there are equally very effective links with other schools to whom children might transfer. For example, during the inspection, Stephen Hawking' Nursery staff were already training the proposed mainstream support assistant for a child due to transfer into mainstream in almost a term's time.

86. The planned programme of learning opportunities is very good. This very broad and relevant curriculum is strengthened by the excellent play and lunchtime activities that are provided. These are very well supervised and planned and provide an excellent balance of free play and supported learning. Teaching is very securely underpinned by the six areas of learning and the individual targets identified in children's individual education plans. Staff work very hard to build up the children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Although most activities in the classroom are adult-directed, children are encouraged increasingly to use their own initiative when selecting materials or activities. Girls and boys and children from all ethnic groups are treated equally and all are strongly encouraged to take part in all activities. Children's learning is very well supported throughout the day, in the separate classes and in the across-Nursery activities which take place in the afternoons. The curriculum, teaching and support in the Reception class lay an excellent foundation for children to move into Year 1 and the close liaison between the teacher and other teachers in the school ensures that this transition is made very smoothly indeed.
87. In Nursery and Reception classes the teachers and support assistants work very well as a team and use a consistent approach with the children. The support assistants are involved in the planning of lessons and know exactly what to do during lessons. Children's behaviour is managed very well through constant support from staff and enthusiastic acknowledgement of children's achievements. Staff manage children skilfully and calmly, attending to their needs with respect and they provide very good role models for the children in their care. They have excellent relationships with children. Consequently children's attitudes to their learning are very good. They are very well motivated, begin to think about what they are to choose and those with the most complex needs become increasingly interested in and aware of adults and each other. Their personal development and relationships with each other are very good in relation to their abilities. Children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is also very well catered for. Very clear supportive messages are given about children's behaviour and this helps children to begin to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. There is great respect for children and their families and all aspects of the child, Nursery/Reception life and achievements are celebrated.
88. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator is a member of the senior management team, is a very skilled practitioner and reflects carefully on how the provision might improve even further. There are very good links to medical staff and physiotherapy and careful following up of recommendations by therapists and other specialists. For children with sensory impairments, however, there is too little external advice and support available and this means that staff are not always able to use the children's equipment or plan activities with the confidence of knowing these children's strengths and needs in relation to their sensory difficulties. Resources within the Foundation Stage are very good. Staff, in general, use a range of technology well to support children's awareness, inclusion in lessons and learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

89. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. All children have targets in this area in their IEPs and make very good progress in relation to these. A few make such good progress that they are able to transfer to mainstream school or nursery. Teaching and support from the support staff in this area is very strong. The teacher takes every opportunity to provide experiences in making choices, offering scope to make decisions and they respond well. The 'Hello' sessions involve all children and give them the opportunity to recognise and focus on each other, as well as to feel special. Even the most complex children demonstrate real pleasure when they experience these routines and the sounds and movements associated with them. Children learn to wait their turn in activities such as their music sessions and progress in their interest and concern for each other. In the Reception class they gain confidence through supported role-play, as they act out a favourite story or show their object, use their switch. They form very good relationships with adults. Higher attainers recognise pictures of themselves and each other and notice who is present. In each of the classes children make steady progress with their self-help skills because of the very good use of time and snack, break, lunch and outdoor play times for support for eating, drinking and dressing skills. Staff know the children, their targets and capabilities very well and give the children time to achieve what they can do, even when it would be quicker to do it for them. This encourages children's self-

awareness, self-esteem, confidence and independence. The more mobile children explore the environment of the classroom and the playground with increasing confidence and interest.

90. The clear but sensitive messages given by staff, ensure that children develop an idea of right and wrong and are expected to think about their actions and how others are affected by them. The constant talking through of what is happening enables those with the most complex needs to begin to relate cause and effect or anticipate what will now happen. Children with physical difficulties and more complex needs are given carefully thought out opportunities for choice and involvement and opportunities to be more independent. For most children this is enabled well through their communication systems and sign and symbols are used well. However, there could be even more involvement of ICT to support independence, pre-literacy and communication in some individual children's programmes. Teaching is very securely underpinned by the written records of children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals and their individual targets identified in their individual education plans.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

91. Children make very good progress in speaking, listening, communicating, including signing, and in their pre-reading and writing skills. There is a very strong emphasis in all the work done on supporting children's communication attempts, as well as in the designated sessions, and the quality of teaching in this area is very good with some excellent features. Staff are very quick to notice children's communications and help them sensitively to contribute to whole group and individual sessions. This means children become much more confident communicators and listeners, who know that the adults around them are interested in what they have to communicate. Lower attainers quickly extend their eye contact and the range of non-verbal responses they give, higher attainers make strong progress in their use of symbols, signs and words. Staff knowledge of children's home languages, including the strong support for those coming from Sylheti speaking backgrounds very strongly supports children's involvement and feelings of well-being. Staff are very quick to recognise children's communications, whatever their form and to acknowledge, extend and celebrate them. Music and class routines are also used very effectively to support children's listening and involvement and children attend markedly better within these as they progress through the Foundation Stage. The range of songs and 'Hello' routines used make a very strong contribution to children's cultural awareness as well as to their communicative and listening skills.
92. Those children with the most complex needs use a range of means that indicate their interest, needs and wants and staff are very skilled at interpreting and responding to these. Occasionally, there is a need for signs or symbols and objects to be used more systematically by all staff, but generally these are used well. Symbols, pictures and objects are used well to promote early reading and object recognition skills. Symbol timetables support children's awareness of sequences and very good use of visual aids help children whatever their ability to be involved in stories. The very good teaching and carefully thought-out provision means that a number of children are able to enter mainstream school or other provision by Reception stage and make their needs and wants known with confidence. These children attend readily to what adults say and try very hard to make sense of it. Children in the Reception class, are able to anticipate key events in a familiar story and most know the names of characters. When they make their marks on paper they do so with increasing shape, form and pressure. Higher attainers recognise their own and others' names and one or two key words. Writing skills are at the very early stages of development, but are systematically supported through the making of class books and colouring and painting activities. Children listen very well to stories told by the staff and look with interest at the pictures or objects used to support their understanding. Lower attaining children enjoy looking at picture books with interest and attempt to turn the pages. All children enjoy action rhymes and increasingly join in parts of these with their teachers, demonstrating clear enjoyment when a much-loved one is being sung.

### **Mathematical development**

93. Children make very good progress in their mathematical understanding during Reception and Nursery. This is because of the 'multi-sensory' way in which counting, colour naming, properties of objects and other early maths ideas are conveyed to children as part of all their experiences, as well as in discretely timetabled lessons and play experiences. The carefully planned timetabled activities and the use of finger and number rhymes support children's counting skills very well. Through regular use of games, counting of children such as '*There were six in the bed*' and '*Five little speckled frogs*' higher attainers have their counting skills reinforced well. Nursery children are supported to or independently put up two thumbs in an action rhyme. By the end of Reception year higher attainers recognise some numbers and are beginning to count to five. They reliably match shapes on a computer programme and in practical activities and know which containers are full and which are empty. They are beginning to identify colours and can find a big or a small object. Other children are helped to find similar objects and group them. A few match according to colour or shape. Children with the most complex needs have a range of sensory experiences that enable them to compare shapes and match objects. Staff help them to count on their fingers and to match these to objects and the children follow the adults' counting carefully with their eyes. Guided and free play with sand, water and a range of other materials supports their early understanding of words like full and empty and of more and less. In construction and sorting activities, ideas of size and shape are being constantly reinforced. The careful links between areas of learning through class topics mean that stories, rhymes and routines reinforce such mathematical understandings very well. In the Reception class, lessons take very good account of the numeracy strategy and the teacher's careful planning ensures that lessons build very well on children's prior experience and previous lessons and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the world**

94. Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because the teaching is very good and teachers are very creative in the ways they present learning opportunities to them. A particular strength is the way staff foster children's awareness, interest and inquisitiveness about events and activities. On entry, the children with most complex needs often have very limited awareness and interest in things around them. They move from very fleeting attention to objects and activities to more sustained attention and increased involvement in everyday routines and activities. Their interest in new stimuli is developed very well through the range of experiences provided at playtime as well as in the classroom. Everyday activities are used well to help children develop very early awareness of historical and geographical understandings. Very good introductions and plenary sessions, weather charts, visits, children's travels within the school environment and careful use of visual aids enable children to become aware of the passage of time and of differences in the environment. Whatever children's ability level staff keep them very well informed about what is happening and what is about to happen. Higher attaining children in Reception indicate when they have seen or done something before; they are helped to relate what they are doing through very good use of teacher made resources, photographs and activities that carefully build on these prior experiences. Themes/ ideas, such as the *baby clinic* and the *mini environments* created with a range of sensory stimuli and textures extend children's experiences very well - they develop children's willingness and confidence in exploring and trying out activities such as exploring tents, 'tunnels' and touching objects, flowers and leaves.
95. The children respond really well to the opportunities they have for using ICT, although this could be used even more to support their learning. All groups of children are well catered for and work which matches their needs well, using a good range of switches and use of touch screens. Tape recorders and digital cameras are also used well by staff to support children's learning. Work with children with profound and multiple learning difficulties concentrates appropriately on their use of switches to communicate, and response to sensory activities such as locating sound and light sources. Children approach the computers with confidence and by reception some know how to turn them on and off and adjust the volume. Higher attaining children use a range of simple drawing and matching programmes; some by Reception are using a mouse confidently, although more available adaptive devices, such as tracker balls, simple keyboards, software where children can select icons or words would support their development even more.

96. In outside and indoor play children are provided with good, carefully planned experiences which help their understanding of how things fit together. Some higher attaining children build simple shapes or put together rail tracks. Others watch shapes and sensory stimuli move in the wind

and are happy to explore sand and water play with their teachers. They watch the sand and water fall with interest, enjoy the textures, sustain their attention well, some becoming absorbed in the activities.

### **Physical Development**

97. Children make very good progress in their physical development overall. In the planned physical development lessons children learn to enjoy and explore movement. As a result of very good teaching, the working together with the physiotherapists and the support staff knowledge and skill, children make progress in body awareness and control. Staff adapt activities very well to the needs of the children and are very aware of how to support their physiotherapy needs, monitoring, for example, their sitting positions very effectively but also taking very good note of the child's comfort. Through actual 'physical education' lessons and their outdoor and indoor play opportunities, children become more aware of their own bodies and what they can do with them. Higher attainers, for example, by Reception show body awareness, can move slowly and quickly and are helped to watch and learn from each other's movements through the encouragement of support staff. They roll with enjoyment when singing '*There were six on the bed*'. They are gradually introduced to early water confidence activities in the hydrotherapy pool. Carefully planned practical, creative and pre-literacy activities support their development of finer body and hand movement skills very well. Higher attaining children are able to make marks and begin to draw or paint a line between two guidelines on paper. Children press or squeeze materials, responding to sound, and are becoming more able control some of their movements. Their actions in action rhymes become more accurate. Children with the most complex needs turn more accurately to sounds and are learning to control their body movements more. Higher attaining children know the main parts of the body such as *head, leg, arm, and fingers*.

### **Creative development**

98. Children make very good progress in terms of their creative development. Music pervades the life of the school. Singing, role-play and rhymes are used to great effect to help children to understand their routines and to sustain their interest and attention in group lessons. Music is used to help children anticipate what will now happen, to calm or to excite them and there is very good use of a range of musical forms and instruments to do this. By Reception individual children have a small repertoire of songs that they happily join in with their teachers. Others move more rhythmically to the singing or to the music in their music lessons and demonstrate real excitement when it is their turn to play an instrument or move around the room. Adults use touch and rhythmic movements to help children to become more aware of the sounds around them and children enjoy any opportunities that they have to become music makers themselves, either through the use of switches, touching and playing instruments or through signalling that they want more. The strong support for music and singing supports children's listening and sound awareness very well, as well as their cultural awareness and their sense of celebration and joy. The children's response in this area is very good and often excellent.
99. Children have had many opportunities for exploring colour, making collages and producing simple printing. They learn about texture and colour through the range of materials put out for them. For example, they explore primary colours in their painting and choose which ones they will use. They make footprints on paper – lower attainers watch their teacher doing so with interest and are more willing to try for themselves. Higher attainers understand that their foot has made the print and turn to look at the pattern that has been made expectantly. Children experiment with colour and shape when painting pictures or modelling with play dough. Children explore large constructional toys and bricks and higher attainers are beginning to use these purposefully. Staff are sensitive to needs and help these to press bricks together, without leading or dominating what



will be constructed. Very strong support is provided by the staff for children's imaginative skills and role play is used to great effect for supporting understanding in other areas but particularly to support self expression. For example, one child's strength in creating an imaginative tea party is used very well to extend his co-operation, communication and to accept other's ideas as well as his own. Teaching and planning for this area is very

strong; a rich and varied range of opportunities is provided and staff strike a very good balance between encouraging children's participation, but still allowing the 'creation' to be the child's own.

## ENGLISH

The school's provision for English is **good**.

### Strengths

- Quality of teaching.
- On-going assessment of pupils.
- Relationships with pupils and with other adults in the classroom.
- Enthusiasm and creativity of teachers and support staff.
- Good opportunities for cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities for a range of writing.
- The identification of learning objectives in medium-term planning.

100. Throughout the school pupils achieve well and make good progress overall in English. There are particular strengths in pupils' achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2 in speaking and listening and reading. The quality of teaching is very good. Since the last inspection, when the provision for English was broadly satisfactory, there has been a good improvement. The good use of 'P' scales (the nationally produced *Differentiated Performance Criteria*) to assess and monitor progress has helped in the setting of targets. Increasing use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning (although more needs to be done), and greater use is made of the library. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has particularly developed and strengthened the teaching of speaking, listening and reading. Pupils' writing is satisfactory but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use a range of writing styles and not enough ICT used for this purpose. Medium-term planning does not always identify learning objectives, so making it difficult for parents or new teachers to state clearly what pupils know, understand and can do. This, and the relatively newly produced scheme of work, does not sufficiently emphasise pupils' writing and has the effect of reducing the impact of the very good teaching.
101. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress in speaking, listening, signing and watching. Pupils enter school with very little meaningful communication. In almost all cases, English is not their mother tongue. The school's emphasis is on communication and pupils learn to understand others through speech, signing, symbols, pictures or objects. The very good start they are given with this in the Foundation Stage is built on very carefully throughout the school. By Year 2 pupils use objects of reference or symbols to communicate their choices. The highest attaining pupils have some emergent spoken language and use words, signs and symbols confidently to make their meaning clear and to show understanding. Teachers use songs and rhymes very well to encourage pupils and they join in key parts of the song or rhyme with vocal responses or single words. In a rendering of *Walk through the jungle* pupils' faces became very animated with the rhythmic walking and they gleefully called out or anticipated the next animal they would meet. The lowest attaining pupils vocalise, smile or give eye contact in response to questions. A small number of pupils use symbols or pictures in order to make choices between two answers.

102. Pupils make good progress and continue to develop their speaking, listening, signing and watching skills throughout Years 3 to 6 as they increase the number of words, symbols, and signs they can confidently use and recognise. Poems and stories are used to stimulate language and staff constantly interact with pupils by talking and signing, to give them opportunities to express themselves. Pupils join in refrains and supply key words in familiar stories. They retell stories they have heard by sequencing pictures, as for instance, when a Year 3 pupil tells the story of the *Monkey Puzzle Tree*. Others can retell the story by find the appropriate animal or bird from the collection of objects relating to the story. Support staff help individual pupils and communicate very well with them, encouraging them to vocalise or articulate responses to them. By Year 6 a few of the highest attaining pupils are able to respond in spoken language to simple questions. Most, however, listen carefully and express themselves and answer questions through using signs or symbols. The lowest attaining pupils listen carefully and can respond to choices by eye pointing or manually pointing to the appropriate symbol. They re-tell the story of the *Green Wide-mouthed Frog* with enormous pleasure as they identify the sounds made by each of the animals they meet.
103. Pupils make good progress in reading and pre-reading skills through the school. Their progress is very strong in Year 1 and 2. Texts are used extensively as pupils and teachers share stories and poems from big books. By Year 2 pupils enjoy looking at books and sharing the books with adults. A few are able to choose books that they like from the shelves of the library or the classroom. These pupils can hold the book correctly and know that books are read from left to right. A few can turn the pages while others use a computer programme to tell stories on the computer. Others with greater or more complex difficulties can, with support, look at or point to pictures, which catch their attention. They can explore fabric or tactile books. By Year 6 the highest attaining pupils share in a story, anticipating the events in the story by finding objects of reference or symbols. Some can identify elements of the story, such as in the case of one pupil who selected a *Train Journey* and made the signs of train wheels turning. As each new incident unfolded, he laughed with excitement and said 'goose', 'lighthouse' or 'grandmother.' Most pupils recognise the letters for the days of the week and for their own names and their individual bank of symbols and signs is constantly being extended.
104. Pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 where they have good opportunities to develop their mark-making and pre-writing skills. Support for handwriting is stronger than for the expression of ideas, however, and the use of more ICT and symbols for expression, would enhance progress and provision even further. Lower attainers use sand trays to develop hand co-ordination and make marks confidently. A few are able use pencils while the use of computer programmes, using touch screens, switches or roller balls help some to track lines or create patterns to further develop their writing skills. While lower attaining pupils learn to write the initial letter of their name with hand-over-hand support, higher attaining pupils use symbols to write a sentence about the story they have heard or use a pencil to copy their name.
105. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory as is their progress in handwriting. However, the opportunities for writing are narrow, but are better in English than in other subjects. Pupils build on earlier skills and some can trace the letters of their name. Pupils use symbols to generate simple sentences based upon a writing frame, such as a when one class wrote a poem about foods which they liked and another used verbs to write sentences about what various members of their class were doing. A few pupils produced a magnificently tactile 'A-Z book of Animals' during their 'Book Week'. Although the English curriculum provides plenty of opportunity for communicating simple information such as 'Sammy is kicking the ball', the opportunities for more challenging and varied writing, such as simple stories, plays, news or diaries is limited. There is some variation in the way teachers use augmentative systems to support pupils' communication, both in expressive and written form. Lower attaining pupils, particularly, would make greater progress in writing if ICT, signs and symbols were used more consistently to support them and help them to express their ideas.
106. The quality of teaching and learning in English throughout the school is very good. The excellent knowledge which teachers have of their pupils provides very good day-to-day assessment, which enables teachers to plan lessons effectively with regard to the individual strengths and

weaknesses of all pupils. In this way, success is ensured for each pupil during each lesson. The careful planning with the learning support staff and the good relationships between them ensures pupils experience seamless help and guidance and are never left isolated so that every moment of time is well spent. The best lessons are made interesting and absorbing by the imaginative use of resources. Big books are made to focus attention for the whole class and imaginative props are used to provide visual clues to the stories. A wonderful selection of monkeys, alligators, elephants, butterflies and tigers enabled pupils to participate in enacting *The Monkey Puzzle Tree* and helped to sequence the narration of it. In the best lessons, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge enables them to ensure that pupils are engaged in a variety of related activities. The pace is fast, but manageable, with each pupil having challenging and absorbing tasks. Large touch switches with recordable speech, enabled a pupil with no spoken language to speak the refrain '*Walk through the jungle, what do you see? Can you hear a noise? What can it be?*', before another pupil with a switch indicated the name of the next creature. Follow up activities involve fabric books, writing using symbols or computers or choosing individual tasks after the scheduled work has been completed. This enables every child to access the lesson appropriately and exercise some independent learning. Story telling is always expressive so that pupils are totally absorbed. Relationships in the classroom are very good and create an atmosphere of trust and support which encourages pupils to be confident and happy. Pupils work well together when the opportunity allows as in classes where they do paired work. They take turns well and are supportive of each other. Their attitudes to lessons are very positive because the teaching and activities are very interesting. Teachers' knowledge of Bengali is a positive advantage on occasions both to provide positive attitudes and to help pupils to understand more clearly.

107. Occasionally, the pace is slow because the teacher does not plan sufficiently challenging extension activities for higher attaining pupils. They have to wait while others respond to questions that are too easy for them. The lack of a wider range of communication aids than the school currently has also prevents easier access to the curriculum for some pupils who find difficulty in expressing themselves. Although sign and symbols are generally used well by many staff to support learning in English, there are times when such support is inconsistent, to the detriment of the pupils' learning.
108. The recently appointed co-ordinator is currently revising the policy for English, which is heavily slanted towards communication and literacy and lacks detail about the subject's approach and philosophy to all the aspects of English. There are schemes of work and these are a good starting point. However, they do not identify clearly enough what pupils need to do in each area of English at each stage and what criteria need to be met. This causes difficulties when identifying precisely what pupils know, understand and can do, both for new teachers and in the writing of annual reports to parents. Since the last inspection, staff have been trained in implementing the principles of the National Literacy Strategy and this has been introduced across the whole school. The school has successfully addressed the issues surrounding the adaptation of materials for the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple difficulties. While ICT is used in class, opportunities for ICT are not systematically identified and the focus for writing is at present insufficiently wide ranging for older pupils. There is evidence of a small amount of use of technology such as switches, single touch switches which have recordable speech and computers to aid pupils in learning and communicating. However, the possibilities for extending the range of communication aids should be further explored.
109. There is a well-used and attractive library, which is well stocked with texts in English and dual language. Teaching rooms are good and each class maintains a collection of books. Although there are insufficient big books, teachers are resourceful in making large texts for whole class use. There is a good choice and range of books for younger pupils, but there is a shortage of age appropriate books for older pupils.
110. The learning opportunities provided in English are good overall. The provision for cultural education is good and pupils have the chance of participating in theatre workshops such as those run by the Oily Cart theatre company. The school holds a very successful 'book week' when activities such as visiting storytellers engage the pupils. The teaching of Literacy is now established and has led to a more systematic coverage of reading, particularly non-fiction, but

there is an awareness that there is a need for more books that are appropriate for older pupils. Literacy strategies focusing on individual words and sentences are well met, but more attention could now be given to the different styles of writing which are used for different purposes, which would contribute to extending the range of different kinds of writing skills, particularly for older pupils. Teachers of all subjects are committed to the teaching of literacy and teach key words in all their subjects through text, signs and symbols.

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The provision for English as an additional language (EAL) is **very good** and a major strength of the school.

### Strengths

- Pupils are totally integrated and achieve well.
- Cultures celebrated and valued.
- Provision for Bengali / Sylheti speakers.
- Home/school liaison.

### Areas for improvement

- Annual reports to parents.

111. The provision of English as an additional language (EAL) is very good and a major strength of the school. Eighty five per cent of the pupils at the school come from families where English is not their mother tongue. The overwhelming majority are of Bengali origin, while a very few are from Somalia. The very high percentage of pupils with EAL means that the success of this area is reflected in the school as a whole. English as an additional language did not form any part of the previous inspection so it is not possible to make any judgement about improvement in the provision for these pupils.
112. Pupils can enter the school at any time from the Nursery to Year 6, often with no spoken language or way to communicate. They are little used to school routines; a very small number are seeking refuge and have had a very troubled early existence. The school welcomes and incorporates them all very well. Most have profound or multiple learning disabilities in addition to their language needs. They make very good progress in line with progress throughout the school. They are very well integrated into the culture of the school and their individual needs are met well. Their cultures are acknowledged and celebrated through, for instance, songs sung by everyone in Bengali for some morning assemblies. They feel valued and appreciated.
113. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with EAL is very good and cultures are assimilated seamlessly in the classroom. Teachers and support staff have some knowledge of the Bengali or Sylheti language and use it unobtrusively to make a young child feel at home or to understand something but all the teaching and signing is done in English. Pupils understand that they use English at school and that it is essential to communication with others. Sometimes a child will use Bengali to express him or herself in an unexpected way. After a geography lesson in which pupils had to find a route to the dining room prior to making a map, one young girl, puzzled about the emptiness of the room, asked the learning assistant, in Bengali, if it was now time for dinner. Teachers use English to teach all their subjects, but support this by using signs and symbols as well as pictures or objects of reference as an aid to communication, and it is these that the children learn and use. The planning for lessons is very good with teachers taking account of individual needs within the class. Teachers have very high expectations for pupils with EAL and use their extensive knowledge of the pupils to help them to learn. Pupils are given a good range of homework which is matched to their needs each work; parents receive guidance on how to help their children.
114. Pupils with EAL learn very well. They work hard and concentrate and take pleasure in their successes. They have a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils with EAL have exactly the same degree of success as pupils of similar age and ability within their classes in school. They are enthusiastic about school and enjoy coming. They behave well and are involved in all activities both in the class and in lunchtime or after school. Whenever possible, they take responsibility and some are able to take the register to the office either alone or with a degree of support. One girl in Year 6 acquitted herself very well when she represented the school at a mathematics workshop involving pupils from a variety of special schools.

115. Provision for personal development is very good. Speech, physio-, and occupational therapists are available. Individual Education Programmes (IEP) are in place to provide targets for each pupil and these are reviewed annually. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits from local groups help to affirm cultures and values and make pupils positive about themselves as well as showing appreciation of others.
116. Pupils are very well cared for. There are child protection and anti-racist policies in place. Their IEPs include targets for feeding and personal hygiene where appropriate and the pupils are monitored frequently and regularly. There was no evidence of any oppressive or threatening behaviour. Procedures for monitoring academic attainment are good. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects but sometimes lack clearly defined criteria for success. Consequently, teachers are over-reliant on their own knowledge of what pupils know and are to learn next. While this is effective during the time when a pupil is with the teacher, it does not make for easy and continuous progression when a child has a new teacher.
117. Parents hold the school in high esteem and the school works very well with parents of pupils with EAL. Parents are welcomed into the school from early morning. Very good visual displays labelled in English, symbols and Bengali show pictures of their many activities, their representatives at school and in the community and where to get help if needed. The school has employed a Bengali / Sylheti speaking home/school liaison worker who provides a very good link between parents and teachers and gives parents the opportunity to discuss any issues which trouble them. She extends the welcome by meeting children off the morning buses and parents bringing their children to school. *'Nursery children find it very comforting to be greeted in their mother tongue. It's like being back with mother,'* she says. She works well to ensure pupils' attendance by telephoning parents with reminders or to negotiate returns to school after hospital appointments. Attendance is well monitored for ethnicity. A very good series of parents' meetings are organised to enable them to learn Makaton signing to help their children to make more progress. Class coffee mornings are held in Bengali/Sylheti to explain the curriculum to parents. The home/school liaison worker also arranges Father's Meetings to involve them more in school. Here they might do glass painting, practical work or reading to their children. Embroidery classes taught by a visiting teacher during the school day are attended well by mothers. Mothers and Toddlers group swimming is also well attended. Parents with limited English also value the good contact made by the home/school liaison worker prior to the review meetings when the IEP is talked through and explained. Letters are translated and reports are explained. The local Bengali community centre is closely involved in the activities of the school and is encouraged to monitor the school's progress.
118. Annual reports to parents are just satisfactory, though are valued by parents. They can take two formats. The letter-style report is very long and informative, but the folder of photographs of what their child has done in school, annotated with captions is very much appreciated by parents. Neither make it easy to identify what pupils know, understand or can do in each subject. Again, it is the home/school liaison worker who mediates and explains verbally as their format prevents straightforward translation. About a quarter of the parents are totally reliant upon translation as they have no other English-speaking children in the house. The school recognises the needs to explore as many formats as possible to enable parents to make their considered response to their child's reports and is reviewing this to strengthen their practice even further.
119. Parents of children and pupils with EAL make a very good contribution to their learning at home and at school. Parents and teachers work well together and teachers explain the homework well so that parents can help their children. They participate in school activities and particularly enjoy school assemblies, which sometimes reach into their culture but always celebrate the children's achievements. Parents know that they can talk to the home/school liaison worker at any time and that the class teacher will then contact them to discuss their queries.
120. The leadership and management of EAL is very good. There is a clear direction and focus with a commitment to high standards for all pupils. A very good action plan has identified areas for further development including admissions, transfer links to secondary schools, homework and a video/photo record of pupils' progress for evaluation. The governors are closely involved in the

decisions taken regarding the use of funding and the employment of the home/school liaison worker as well as the funding of the weekly training programme for teachers to learn Sylheti/Bengali. They have also taken the decision to put the emphasis on communication via English so that they can become increasingly independent as they grow up. A Bengali-speaking support assistant works in each classroom help the pupils. The home/school liaison worker is involved in a weekly training session with others in the local authority. The work of those involved in EAL is closely monitored by the co-ordinator. There are only a tiny number of Somali families and little neighbourhood community support. As a result of this, and guidance resulting from LEA monitoring of the school's work of with ethnic groups, the school puts additional resources of time into helping these families overcome social difficulties so that their children can learn more effectively. Learning resources are good and the school makes very effective use of the human and educational resources available in the local community.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision for mathematics is **good**.

### Strengths

- The enthusiasm and commitment of teachers.
- The excellent support for individuals and small groups provided by support staff.
- The use of exciting, stimulating, multi-sensory resources.
- The teaching of number.
- Lesson planning and management.

### Areas for improvement

- Teaching to the whole group at the end of lessons.
- Augment scheme of work to include outcomes.
- Monitor for consistency and continuity.
- Improve appearance and relevance of resources used by older pupils.
- Allow more time for position and early measure.

121. Pupils' achievement and their progress in mathematics are good overall. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards have improved slightly since the last inspection with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils with English as an additional language (the majority of pupils) also make good progress because of the multi-sensory approach to the subject and also because every class has a Sylheti speaker.
122. By Year 2, the most able pupils join in the actions of counting songs, count along with an adult, and recognise the numeral '1' as the start of counting a set of objects without adult help. They begin to recognise comparative words like bigger and smaller and release a die at the count of three, although this more anticipation rather than the actual recognition of the number. Pupils with the most learning difficulties, such as pupils with PMLD, are fully involved in all lessons by the adults supporting them. When a count is made or a shape explored they are helped to feel the number or shape, it is spoken and signed to them and they hear the counting rhyme sung by the adults. In one lesson on size, pupils were fitted with extra large or small hats and then shown themselves in mirrors.
123. By Year 6, the most able pupils can touch and count up to 20 objects when the numbers are there as a prompt. They can find missing numbers from a sequence, such as 1, 2, x, 4, 5, match the numbers to groups of objects and rearrange numbers in the correct order when working with numbers up to 6 and sometimes 10. They understand some vocabulary related to objects in space, such as *in*, *on*, *by*, *next to*, and can follow basic instructions. For example, they are able to find their way around the school and can understand verbal instructions about where to sit in the dinner hall. Some of the least able can touch a switch to start and finish a count from one to five with help from an adult, others show occasional stilling and responsive eye movements when given objects to feel.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is matched by the good quality of learning. Teachers, particularly in the Nursery, Reception and in Years 1 and 2 are well-prepared, enthusiastic and present activities to pupils in a lively stimulating way. A key feature of the success of these lessons is the way all the adults in the room work as a team. The majority of lessons are multi-sensory which enables pupils to experience number or shape in a variety of ways. For example, in an activity where pupils rolled a ball to knock over skittles the numbers were represented by objects, spoken, signed, shown as digits and tapped onto pupils' arms. In another lesson, a group of pupils working at the lower 'P' levels experienced shape by having the words spoken, feeling textured circles and squares, having the shape drawn in the air and being helped to draw the shape themselves. Support staff play a vital role in the quality of teaching. They show complete commitment to the pupils they are supporting and real delight when one of them does something well. This facial expression in its turn provokes a reaction from the pupil so that is clear they know they have succeeded. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen.
125. Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work, particularly lower down the school. This is because the teachers find interesting ways of presenting mathematical experiences. They love number rhymes and songs, particularly when objects and actions accompany them. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the *Five Little Ducks* song was used to finish the session and this drew all the pupils' attention back again while they watched what happens and joined in some of the actions. In Year 3, counting rhymes about fish and spacemen had a similar effect. Pupils try hard and show that they can concentrate. For example, a group of pupils playing a number game were able to keep focused on the game and their teacher despite another pupil throwing a major temper tantrum in the room. A few of the oldest pupils, however, show less patience with the tasks presented and soon look around for something else to do – teaching here is not all that exciting for them, although satisfactory overall. Mathematics sessions make a good contribution to pupils' personal development when the pupils are rewarded for their efforts and know they have worked hard, when they start to develop the idea of taking turns through counting rhymes and when they are able to stay focused on the activity even when it is someone else's turn.
126. Resources for teaching mathematics are mainly produced by the staff. In the nursery and lower school the materials used are bright, varied, colourful or shiny and lend themselves to multi-sensory work by having interesting textures or producing sounds when tapped or shaken. These are very relevant for pupils with PMLD or those for visual impairment. Staff are extremely effective in capturing and holding pupils' attention. In marked contrast, older pupils are sometimes asked to work with scruffy number lines and unexciting objects.
127. Numeracy skills are developed because teachers use the numeracy format to plan their lessons and to clarify their aims. Number work appears in most lessons across the school, even if it is not the main focus and pupils are all used to hearing the numbers said. The teaching and learning in number are good. There is less work done on positional language and early ideas in measure. As a result, pupils in Year 5 who needed to understand words like *up, down, between, across, forwards, backwards* to successfully follow instructions on the computer and with programmable toys, could not complete the tasks without considerable help.
128. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in mathematics. Switches give the least able the opportunity to be involved, simple computer programmes help develop ideas of cause and effect, more advanced ones allow pupils to match objects to numbers and Roamers help with estimating and counting units of length.
129. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Numeracy training has increased the co-ordinator's knowledge of how early mathematical ideas develop and thus her ability to recognise lack of continuity or inconsistency of approach. Her observations of lessons and scrutiny of work have already revealed areas that need attention. For example, although there was agreement at a minuted staff meeting, not all teachers are using the agreed signs for the digits. She is at the early stages of writing typical outcomes for pupils of different abilities to go alongside the activities listed in the scheme of work. This development and the collection of assessment materials in the



form of annotated photos should both help teachers' planning and improve progression, particularly for pupils who make only small gains.

## SCIENCE

Overall the provision for science is **good**.

### Strengths

- Good teaching and learning and particularly teachers' good attention to practical work and good demonstrations which aids pupils' learning well.
- A sense of 'fun' in learning and pupils' very positive attitudes and enthusiasm.
- Key vocabulary is very well taught and emphasised.

### Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work which need more detail, updating and better support the teaching and pupils' learning in scientific enquiry.
- Written planning to support pupils' different outcomes in lessons, not just at the medium-term stage.
- The use of ICT, the wider use of audio-visual resources to support learning.

130. Sound progress has been made in improving the provision for science since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved as well as pupils' progress, both of which are now good. A scheme of work was produced shortly after the last inspection. Although it is clear, gives outline guidance and relates well to the school's long-term plan (which sets out topics to be studied in a generally reasonable and balanced way), a few topics need more emphasis and revisiting more regularly. However, this has not been updated in the light of the new National Curriculum programmes of study, published in 2000. Teachers do, however, recognise that the current documentation does not give them enough assistance in parts, especially in relation to how investigations and experimentation should occur and what this might mean for PMLD pupils. They seek further guidance from other publications and work hard to ensure that pupils obtain a depth of knowledge and understanding of the ideas introduced.
131. Pupils' achievements overall are good. This is because of the good teaching and the way teachers make science interesting by planning activities that enable pupils to think about scientific ideas and try these out practically. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about the subject because of this and they routinely anticipate that they will be investigating, observing, making predictions or carrying out 'tests'. Their understanding of scientific enquiry progresses soundly throughout the school – this could be improved further by more detailed and specific guidance. This is area is weaker than their knowledge of science, which is good. Teachers are confident about how to design activities to promote this and pupils are enthusiastic about participating in these. This helps them learn well and make progress.
132. By the end of Year 2, pupils have explored a wide range of scientific 'topics' and know that light come from a source, such as a torch or the sun. They press switches to operate moving toys and know that these need batteries to make them work. Lower attaining pupils and those with PMLD turn to light sources and some locate sound. Pupils study the properties of living and non-living 'things'. For instance, they examine how worms wriggle and snails move slowly. They compare these with plastic bricks and toy pans and sort pictures used to re-enforce the ideas. Their understanding of plants as 'living' is more difficult to grasp, but the teachers' good explanations and diagrams for higher attaining pupils help them to understand better that plants live. Pupils have grown beans and studied the importance of the root and stem. This helps them understand that these 'inanimate' object, live too. Higher attaining pupils go on to label the parts of plants, although for some, this is too abstract at this stage.
133. By the end of their time in the school, in Year 6, pupils have searched for minibeasts and explored their properties. Some are able, with help, to make simple circuits using batteries, buzzers and a few can use switches in their circuits. One pupil has independently made a simple circuit. Higher attaining pupils know about changes and can say which are reversible and which are not. Teachers find creative and imaginative ways of helping pupils gain difficult ideas and this aids their progress well. For instance, pupils' gained a good understanding of how the rotation of the earth by placing a photograph of pupils' on a model earth and shining a

torch onto it. Pupils gained an idea that as the earth rotated, the photograph became dark. It is the systematic building upon pupils' knowledge, checking out what they know and what they do not understand which really helps them make the progress they do.

134. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning is good. Specific strengths of the good quality of teaching are the teachers' attention to key vocabulary and ideas and the way they plan work for different groups of pupils. Teachers show a determination to present key ideas in a range of different ways, including using symbols, objects and 'real life' animals and plants and always make learning 'fun'. They go over ideas so that pupils have thoroughly learned them and are successful in their demonstrations and explanations. In a lesson on forces for Years 4 pupils, pupils experienced the pushing and pulling forces by pushing / pulling their peers in a toy truck. They tried 'tug-o-war' and realised that one force can overcome another. This was particularly successful for a blind pupil who could directly 'feel' the forces. In Year 3 pupils carried out a plaque test, under the guidance of a visiting dental hygienist, using disclosure tablets to see the effect on their teeth. They also examined large models to understand the importance of cleaning. A particular strength is the way they practically plan for the different groups in their class, ensuring that work is well matched to their needs and tasks are meaningful for them. Specific outcomes are identified in written planning, although these are pupils to gain over time rather than related to the specific lesson. Teaching could be even better focussed and assessment sharper if this was done. Support assistants are used very well, although in whole class parts of lessons, occasionally they have little to do. Some support individual and explain and check their understanding but some teachers need to give more specific guidance as to their role in these parts.
135. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Monitoring and support by the co-ordinator for teaching and ideas for planning have resulted in some lively and imaginative science teaching. The subject improvement plan is satisfactory and the out-of-date schemes of work are scheduled for review. The tracking of pupils' progress has been modified so that pupils are assessed in relation to the 'P' levels, but the early levels need more detail relating to scientific contact to help teachers define and establish progress over time and in a wider range of opportunities. There is some use of audio-visual resources and ICT and this has a good effect on pupils' learning. For instance, the use of a video of the earth from a space capsule helped Year 6 pupils understand better how the earth was viewed from afar. However, these resources are under-used and limited in range.

## ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **good**.

### Strengths

- A well planned curriculum with schemes of work which have been updated and allow pupils to build on their prior learning.
- The range of different objects, materials and textures which are created and explored.
- Strong leadership by the co-ordinator.
- Art makes a very strong contribution to pupils' self-awareness and awareness of others.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to enable some pupils to be more independent in their art work.
- Pupils' report to parents so that they include detail about pupils' skills.

136. There has been good improvement in the provision of art and design since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and the progress pupils make, in lessons and over time, have both improved and are now good. The subject policy and schemes of work have been updated; there is now a detailed scheme of work in place that links well into all aspects of National Curriculum

programmes of study. It allows for pupils' art experiences and skills to be increasingly systematically built on and monitored.

137. The well-planned sensory curriculum considers the needs of pupils and students of all abilities and enables them to achieve well over time. From the work on display, records and discussion with teachers, by Year 2, pupils have explored colour and texture and enjoyed a broad experience of creative arts. Reproductions of important works of art, for example of a painting by Picasso, are used to sharpen pupil's awareness of colour and texture and to develop their own ideas of themselves as artist very well. Pupils use primary colours to then create their own works of art – using hands, fingers and brushes to make their marks. By the end of their time in school, in Year 6, pupils have experienced a range of materials and art forms, including sculpture workshops, papier-mâché and printing, weaving and stencilling, within a range of styles and cultural emphases. For example, they use block prints to make borders on fabrics within an African Art emphasis. Higher attainers know that they have made one similar to an African material they have been shown and use the blocks very carefully, positioning on the edge and checking it will create the desired effect. Pupils with more complex needs press harder when asked to do so and the careful support of staff does not take over the activity. These pupils know that their effort has created the design, rather than their teacher's.
138. Throughout the school a range of different objects, materials and textures are created and explored which encourage pupils to appreciate the complexities of materials and enjoy their feel and visual effect. For example, pupils explore the qualities of different media and improve fine motor skills through the very good 'hand on hand' support of staff. Other pupils use pencils, colours and paintbrushes with increasing control. A few teachers also plan to use ICT well to extend some pupils' use of colour and tools, although there are instances when the use of ICT would have enabled some pupils to be more independent in their art work. In most lessons, careful planning enables pupils to experience a rich multi-sensory experience that maximises their responses to the tasks in hand and supports children's expressions of their likes and dislikes in others' work and their own. Children's response in art and design is therefore very good. They respond very well to their teacher's suggestions and look carefully at each other's work. Art makes a very strong contribution to their self awareness and awareness of others. The spirit of celebration and of effort that surrounds their work and the range of cultural media and artwork that is explored mean that it also contributes very strongly to their spiritual and cultural awareness.
139. The quality of teaching is good overall and is sometimes very good or excellent. Lessons are planned well to ensure that all pupils have access to the broad range of experiences available to them. Learning support staff provide an invaluable support to pupils, especially those with additional and complex needs. Their patience and understanding leads to good quality responses from pupils, enabling them to participate in lessons to the best of their ability. Teachers are generally well prepared and most plan very effectively from the scheme of work and are clear about the art objectives they are trying to achieve, whilst supporting pupils' broader IEP targets. However, in a small number of classes teaching is inconsistently supported by signing and the use of symbols for communication; introduction and plenary sessions to lessons are usually well supported by signing, and symbols, but this support is not always sustained throughout the lesson and does not always sustain a flow of pupils' ideas. Occasionally, pupils are over directed by staff, and are often in the rush to complete an activity. This then leads to pupils' skills and awareness not always being sufficiently developed in these lessons, although they make take great pleasure from the finished product. Pupils have won external awards for their work in the past and the school regularly engages in collaborative projects such as their London Marathon banner of which they and the children are rightly proud.
140. The subject benefits from the strong leadership of the co-ordinator, who has a great enthusiasm for the subject and monitors and supports staff well with advice and ideas. The work of pupils is celebrated in very well mounted and creative displays around the school, which enhance the presentation of the school to parents and the public. Art and design are well linked to the whole school curriculum through the topic plans for all subjects. Workshops, visits and the use of outside artists enrich the curriculum further. Pupils' progress is now tracked in more detail, although reports to parents tend to detail more the experiences children have had than the progress they have made in art skills and understanding. As with other areas of the school's

work on assessment, assessment in art is currently being developed to bring it more closely in line with national programmes of study and ways of monitoring such as the 'P' levels.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision overall for design and technology is **good**.

### Strengths

- Good leadership and management which is driving the subject forward.
- Good adaptation of the curriculum which makes it accessible to all pupils.
- Good accommodation and resources which promote good learning.

### Areas for improvement

- The recording of assessment and the consistency of reports to parents.

141. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. Teaching is now better with interesting activities and pupils' learning and attitudes to the subject have improved. Documentation to support the subject is now in place and is helping to guide teaching. Very good links with other subjects reinforce learning in other lessons. The use of ICT, which was not seen during the last inspection, is now good and is having an impact on pupils' access to the subject.
142. Pupils achieve well in all year groups. This is because activities are practical and planned well for individual success. Pupils spend time designing their product, they work hard to produce and improve it, then evaluate what they have done. By the end of Year 2 pupils are good at making choices. They select the colours and materials to make felt, looking very carefully as they combine wool and cotton by binding, rolling or sticking. Physically able pupils use kits to build a toy car and combine junk to make a boat. They handle simple tools such as a glue gun to stick wool and plastic sheeting. Pupils with PMLD make their choices through gesture and eye pointing. Pupils who are resistant to tactile experiences show their choice by rejecting some materials, leaving those with which they feel comfortable. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils become increasingly confident across all areas of design and technology and respond positively to opportunities for independence. They complete surveys on favourite foods, they name tools and ingredients and follow simple recipes. By the end of Year 6 some pupils understand the importance of selecting the right materials for the job, for example, when designing and building a boat. They discover which materials float best, then draw round templates before combining their materials in a range of ways. In food technology they combine ingredients in order to make a variety of dishes such as pancakes and biscuits, then select their favourite. Pupils with PMLD choose materials, shapes, colours, tools and ingredients and co-operate in completing their tasks. Resources overall are good, promoting good achievement. However, achievement could be even better for some pupils with adaptations such as splints to enable tools for example hammers, to be held more securely.
143. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge have increased because of good support and advice from the co-ordinator and through good links with the community. This has resulted in better learning for pupils and a broadening of the curriculum. Pupils behave well and work hard because they are interested in what they are doing. A representative from the Building Experience Trust has worked with staff, pupils and parents first to make structures, then to help construct three-dimensional decorations for Christmas and Eid. Teachers and support staff enhance learning by making lessons relevant and accessible, interpreting instructions and giving praise in home languages, so that all pupils learn well. When teaching is at its best, activities are challenging but within pupils' capabilities. In a food technology lesson pupils made scones for an imaginary visit by grandmothers. They learned to match ingredients with words and symbols and recognised signing. They rubbed in and mixed ingredients enthusiastically, demonstrating some skills they had learned previously, and produced commendable scones! Teachers use ICT well to promote learning for pupils of all abilities. Recipes and other instructions are always supported by symbols. Digital photographs record achievement and help pupils evaluate their work. Pupils use infrared switches to turn on appliances safely from a distance and consult the Internet for designs of vehicles or Victorian

recipes. A small amount of teaching could be improved by ensuring that all group activities are related as closely as possible to the objectives for the lesson.

144. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has shared her knowledge well, either directly through observation of lessons and pooling of ideas or by discussing pupils' work and looking at teachers' records. She has also compiled booklets that have contributed well to all areas of the curriculum being taught. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils visited the local waterways to look at boat making and mills to support bread making. Links with other subjects are very strong, especially through the use of cooking to help pupils experience foods from a round the world. Helpful schemes of work support teaching and learning but assessment is still an area for development.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the provision for geography is **very good** for pupils of all ages.

### Strengths

- Very good provision for practical activities with especially good use made of the local area, which advances pupils' geographical understanding and social development.
- Very good teaching which takes account of individual needs so pupils of all abilities make very good gains in learning.

### Areas for improvements

- Schemes of work need to be revised to show activities and coverage of skills, knowledge and understanding across the year groups.

145. Improvement in geography since the last inspection is good. At that time, it was identified as a key area for improvement because of unsatisfactory progress and because of the lack of geographical content in lessons. Pupils now make very good progress because of very good teaching of the subject, which is made particularly relevant to them. There is a much greater focus on the geography content of lessons.
146. Pupils of all ages achieve very well. By the end of Year 2 they understand that different rooms in school are used for different purposes and are aware of the wider environment through local exploration. This often means travelling on a range of transport which more able pupils can identify. They experience the changing seasons and can select clothing suitable for all types of weather. Pupils with PMLD benefit from a wide range of sensory experiences so that by the end of Year 2 they recognise a number of rooms in school. They become particularly animated on entering the dining hall! They recognise a number of animals on a visit to a City Farm and choose their preferred means of transport.
147. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to experience activities well matched to their needs and well chosen for their geographical development. Pupils in Year 3 plan a route through the school using and following symbols according to their ability. More able pupils know right, left and straight ahead. Pupils with communication difficulties use yes/no switches to indicate if objects they are holding match those on the route. By the end of Year 6 pupils develop some environmental awareness through comparing areas that are clean or dirty. They recognise canals and rivers on a map and recall some factual information about waterways after a trip on the Regent's Canal. They compare England with China, noting similarities and difference between those two countries such as food, festivals and music. Those with PMLD experience the same range of environments as their peers. Good use of ICT helps them to record these experiences and recall their visits at a future date. Subject vocabulary of all pupils is broadened by constant repetition of new words and by the reinforcement of photographs, maps and signs to match the words.



148. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers' expectations are high. Together with effective support staff they plan lessons which are meaningful to pupils of all abilities. Many lessons involve exploring the school and its grounds or visiting the very diverse local neighbourhood. Relationships and behaviour are very good so pupils concentrate and make very good progress. Teachers adapt and devise resources that promote learning well. For example, pupils match objects with many rooms in the school then help to cut out pictures of them then attach them to a very large plan. On a field trip, particularly well planned to promote comparison between two contrasting areas, pupils explored building materials such as brick, metal and marble in the classroom. Travelling by train to Canary Wharf, they matched their samples with the building, using a digital camera and tape recorder to record sights and sounds. Comparisons will be made with a village environment and the evidence, having been experienced, can be evaluated in the classroom.
149. Leadership of the subject has been good. The co-ordinator is newly appointed so has not yet had time to monitor teaching. She has much good work to build on and can concentrate on keeping teaching levels at the current high level. This will leave time to refine the schemes of work so that improved planning can better support pupils' progress, although teachers are very adept at modifying already existing planning. Assessment procedures, which are not yet used effectively, also need reviewing. This will allow the good group and individual targets to be assessed regularly and used systematically as the basis for reports to parents. The curriculum is enriched significantly by excellent use of local transport including the Docklands Light Railway, buses and boats and provides equal opportunities for all pupils to have access to field trips

## HISTORY

The overall provision for history is now **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Good use of visits support learning well.
- Good links are made with other subjects, which reinforce pupils' learning.

### Areas for improvements

- Refining and extending schemes of work to show activities, skills, knowledge and understanding across each year group.
- Consistent assessment builds on target setting and informs reports to parents.

150. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. At that time history was a cause for concern and was identified as a key issue because of unsatisfactory progress and barely satisfactory teaching. Then, as now, a new co-ordinator had just been appointed.
151. Pupils' achievement is good in history. Some ideas in history, especially change over a period of time, are difficult for pupils to understand, especially those with significant special educational needs. It is because teachers make learning very relevant that pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils know and anticipate the routines of the day, helping to check the daily timetable. They start to understand growth and can sequence photographs of people of varying ages, identifying members of their family. They celebrate black history and start to understand the historical reasons for the diversity of the local population. Pupils of all abilities including those with PMLD investigate their neighbourhood then help to compile class books which record their visits and celebrate the history of some of the local population, for example how the Bangladeshi sailors came to Britain. Pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve well because of good opportunities provided by drama, visits and cross-curricular links such as food technology. By the end of Year 6, they know something of what it is like to be a pupil in a Victorian school. At a 'Ragged school' they wrote on slates, used an abacus and wore a dunce's cap so understood better the feelings that a Victorian child might have experienced. More able pupils can name some famous Tudors, play games of the time and express their dislike of 'Tudor' stew! Pupils

with PMLD take part fully in drama activities, dressing as Romans or Egyptians, experiencing how slaves carried their masters or eating honey pancakes at a feast.

152. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2. There was no opportunity to observe lessons in Years 3 to 6 but from the available evidence teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. This evidence included photographic records, documentation and discussion with staff. Teachers and support staff are imaginative and creative in adapting the curriculum to suit pupils of all abilities whilst retaining subject rigour. They engage all the senses of pupils and make learning fun. A strength is the planning for practical activities including a range of visits to the local and wider area, for example to look at the history of local transport or to investigate instruments of torture in the Tower of London. All pupils have good opportunities for using first-hand evidence. In a lesson where the teaching was very good lesson it was planned well to demonstrate the passing of time; pupils compared a baby with a five year old. The use of signing to reinforce voice and the constant repetition of language resulted in some response and recognition from pupils. Excellent relationships, resulting in good team working, encouraged most pupils to match clothes and activities relevant to age.
153. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has plans to refine and extend the schemes of work to show more formally what is to be taught in each class. Assessment is unsatisfactory, at present, because achievement of targets is not regularly recorded and the quality of report writing is variable. The subject makes a considerable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and drama supports communication. Resources are satisfactory because the school supplements the supply by loans from local services.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The overall provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** and has improved since the last inspection.

### Strengths

- Confidence of majority of staff when using technology.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Use of switches to involve pupils in group activities.
- Co-ordination and training opportunities.

### Areas for improvements

- Matching equipment to need, particularly in respect to alternative and augmentative communication.
- Using ICT to extend pupils mark making and writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Extending the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 to include more control and data logging.

154. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils build well on their skills developed in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have mainly individual programmes in the Foundation Stage, which allow them to develop at their own rate. For example, a pupil in Reception came in to the classroom, took off his coat, turned on the keyboard and started to play musical notes on it. He then took the microphone and started to whisper other pupils' names into it. All of this was unprompted behaviour showing that he felt 'at home' with the equipment and knew how to use it. The skills of children in the Foundation Stage who transfer to mainstream school are often more wide ranging than pupils in Years 1 and 2. In these years, they use touch screens to draw unaided and use toys that produce music or sounds when handled in certain ways. Others can only draw with help, or participate in recording messages on Big Mac (a large voice recordable switch operated device). The least able are helped to press switches at appropriate times to secure their involvement in group activities.

155. The most able pupils in Years 3 to 6 use touch screens and My Amazing Dictionary (a multimedia dictionary with words, pictures and sounds) to find key words from stories. Some use Switch Clicker (a program where pupils can select words, symbols or pictures to produce a sequence of these) to write a very simple sentence. They show confidence when approaching computers and other technology. For example, a pupil using a remote control car in a lesson on estimating length and identifying forward and backward movements, discovered that he could make the car turn and that it would jiggle about if he ran it against a wall. He spent a long time and concentrated very hard whilst he experimented with the effects produced by different movements on the control unit. The least able pupils are able to use switches, for example to say 'hello' during their morning welcome session or to start a count in a maths lesson.

156. It is clear that ICT has improved well since the last inspection and that teaching is good. Computers are often used regularly to motivate and involve pupils in a wide range of subjects, enabling them to take part and to improve their progress. For example in music, the most able can use software to make a tune, others are able to choose sounds and the least able can cause sounds to happen. In design technology pupils use infra-red switches to turn on kettles and other equipment and in art they begin to draw their own pictures using First Artist and Paintbrush. The increased confidence of teachers due to their recent training has given pupils more access to a variety of technology. The increasing confidence of support staff through their own training means that pupils are well supported, questioned and encouraged whilst they are using technology. The combined effect of this is that pupils approach computers, keyboards, microphones and switches with assurance. However, there are occasional instances where support staff do the task for the pupil instead of waiting for them to do it themselves. There are also occasions when the equipment available does not meet the needs of the pupil, for example a pupil in Year 2 was expected to work with a mouse when a roller ball would have provided much needed control.
157. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, because activities are made interesting. They enjoy the stimuli provided by cause and effect programmes and concentrate well when having their turn on the computer. They show delight when they discover something moves as a result of their actions, whether it be a change of picture in response to switch pressing in Years 1 or 2 or turning a remote control car in Years 3 to 6. For a few pupils, controlling their movements sufficiently to press a switch is hard work and yet they will struggle to do it and show pleasure in their success.
158. The recently produced scheme of work should provide a good basis for teaching which is relevant to the needs of the pupils and covers the required range of experiences. At the moment, pupils' opportunities to use sensing and control technologies are limited and more frequent use could be made of ICT to extend pupils' mark-making and writing in Years 3 to 6. Data handling is also an under-developed area, although one pupil last year was part of an out-of school project where she had to stand at the front and record everyone's preferences. The use of ICT to support pupils' writing on a consistent basis (particularly in Years 3 to 6) and of simple communication aids and devices is also limited. Although some opportunities are provided these are not widespread and consistent enough to support pupils' progress in these areas.
159. Resources for the subject has improved. The acquisition of digital cameras and quality printers has meant that staff can produce photographs of the pupils which are used each morning as part of the welcome session to teach recognition of self and of others. A photographic record of the attainments of pupils and videos of important school events are used to remind pupils and to prompt responses about events. Tape recorded music is well used to set the mood in sensory sessions and to provide a cheerful welcome to the school in the mornings.
160. The employment of a technician has made it easier for staff to concentrate on educational and classroom issues rather than problems with equipment. It has also speeded up the creation of a school website for sharing information with other similar schools.
161. The co-ordination of the subject is good; of particular merit is the development of an accredited 12-unit training package for support staff and the negotiation of time on each training day for staff to work through this. There are clear plans for the further development of the subject and how existing and future resources can best be used. Assessment is satisfactory but is improving with classroom observations detailing exactly what pupils can currently do and how that matches with the 'P' scales. The photo-record, which is as yet incomplete, gives examples to show staff what pupils of different abilities might be expected to achieve in each area of ICT. This should improve planning.

## MUSIC

Provision for music is **good**.

### Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and teachers' strong informal knowledge of pupils' skills.
- How music underpins the life of the school and how it uses music to support all forms of pupils' self-expression.
- The role music has in supporting pupils' cultural understanding.

### Areas for improvement

- Teachers' planning / schemes of work to ensure pupils' skills are built upon more effectively.
- The space within the music room for the most disabled pupils.
- The use of symbols and sign to support the pupils with the most needs and the use of more specialist technology or advice to support their inclusion in music.

162. At the time of the last inspection music provision, including the teaching and the progress of pupils was satisfactory. This is now good and an improving aspect of the school's work. Music underpins the whole life of the school and contributes to all aspects of its work. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' communicative and listening abilities and their cultural awareness. In conjunction with role-play and drama, it supports their self-confidence, creativity and awareness of self and others. School staff use music very well to reinforce pupils' learning. The use of songs in class routines calms and involves pupils and keeps those pupils with most complex difficulties in touch with where they are in the school day.

163. The pupils' progress is good. Younger pupils in Year 2 enjoy a range of songs that fit in with the assemblies, topics and performances that they are doing, as well as the 'hello' and 'welcome' routines that they have. They learn to play simple percussion instruments and some pitch their singing increasingly accurately. Others move with more rhythmic awareness to slow and fast music, or anticipate the next actions in an action song. Older pupils sing more tunefully and recognise a song by its introductory notes. Pupils learn to wait for their turn to clap and tap out simple rhythms and to play their instruments in accompaniment to their songs. The more able know that some notes are longer than others and are able to follow and remember a simple note sequence and rhythm. By Years 6 some know the names of instruments such as *tambourine*, and *drum* and that different instruments are played in different ways. When asked by their teacher to change the sound of an object, they suggest covering it with cloth or shaking a percussion instrument, hitting a shaker. They play with enthusiasm and are keen to demonstrate to others their performance skills. The more able count the notes they are making carefully. Those with more complex difficulties show more awareness of rhythm and music and need less support for involvement and playing their instruments. Pupil response in music is very good and often excellent. Pupils listen and attend very well, take turns with and share and collaborate with each other. They use teacher feedback about their efforts well and strive to improve their performance.

164. The teaching of music is good overall and has some very good features. In music lessons teachers engage pupils very well and strike a very good balance between listening and performance; a few use ICT very well to support individual pupils' music making and composition, although there is more scope for this. There is inconsistency in the way teachers plan for music and identify musical outcomes, although a few teachers do this very well. Singing and rhythmic work are highly successful aspects of the school's work; teachers use this well to support children's understanding of other aspects of music such as tempo and the dynamics. There is a high level of practical musical expertise and enjoyment of music within the school staff. This means that the range of music forms they expose pupils to is extensive and their own obvious enjoyment of singing, experimenting with and listening to music conveys to pupils who demonstrate similar enthusiasm. Occasionally, a lesson has insufficient challenge for higher attainers or its management has been insufficiently thought out, so pupils become restless as they wait their turn, but support staff are used very effectively to get round this. Teachers use

music and song highly effectively to support ideas in subjects such as maths, English and personal and social education and to meet pupils' specific educational need. This supports and reinforces pupils' learning well and keeps them highly interested and involved. However some individual pupils with sensory impairments would benefit from more care with their positioning from some staff, more use of symbols and sign to support their learning and/or more specialist technology or advice to support their inclusion in music. Currently staff do this well through individual staff member support but pupils would have more independent access if there were more systematic support for these areas available.

165. The current music scheme of work and policy need revision. The planning, and the ways in which pupils' previous learning is built on, needs to be developed more systematically. This means that although most pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in lessons, there is not systematic monitoring of all their musical experiences and these are not always built on over time as well as they could be. Although pupils' progress is tracked and reported on, this is an underdeveloped area. Teachers have very strong informal knowledge of pupils' levels and skills but all this needs to be developed into a stronger documentation of pupils' skills knowledge and understanding as well as experiences in all aspects of the subject. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and she is well aware of what needs now to be done to strengthen all elements of music further. She is drawing together all aspects of the school's work into a 'creative arts' scheme of work, that recognises how the school currently uses music to support all forms of pupil expression, as well as ensuring all aspects of the music programmes of study are covered systematically.
166. The school takes part in a range of outside musical events and have visits from musical and dramatic groups. These enrich the pupils' understanding and experiences further. Its use in all aspect of the school's life greatly contributes to the feelings of well being within the school and the spirit of celebration from the nursery upwards. Excellent use is made of support staff and of music resources, which include a good range of ethnic instruments. The music room itself is small and too enclosed considering the difficulties of some pupils. However, staff make good use of their own rooms and of the hall to ensure that the music environment is as relaxing and supportive as possible.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

There has been a very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection and the overall provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), based on pupils' IEP / personal targets, is now **very good**.

### Strengths

- The dedication with which all staff work at pupils' personal targets in the areas of mobility, toileting and feeding.
- The positive ethos of the school which encourages respect for others.
- Planning at classroom level based on excellent knowledge of individual pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- The production of a scheme of work to include sex education, drugs education and citizenship to give better continuity to planning and ensure the very good work is carried on in the eventuality of staff being absent.

167. Achievement and progress in PSHE are very good in relation to pupils' standards when they joined the school. The programme is mainly based on pupils' IEP targets. There is no difference between the progress of boys and girls. In Years 1 and 2 some pupils are mobile, able to indicate that they need to go to the toilet and to feed themselves. They show awareness of self and others and are able to focus on an activity and join in with repetitive group songs and rhymes. The least able pupils are provided with a range of experiences where they are constantly stimulated and included. For example, at playtime these pupils are positioned under a tent and

have various pieces of colourful, movable, noise-producing equipment placed on their trays. Staff take their hands and show them how to touch to make things happen but they cannot make the movement themselves. They are encouraged to try more varied flavours and textures of food. For example, one snack time a pupil who rejects solid food was successfully persuaded to eat very small pieces of biscuit. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are becoming more independent. They are able to find their way to the office or dining hall without an adult, are willing to help their teacher or other pupils. For example, two pupils from Year 6 help get the Hall ready for assembly, hand out materials and sign the key ideas. They make their own food choices, collect their cutlery and eat their lunch unaided. The least able need support for toileting and feeding, but show awareness of others and react increasingly to things going on around them. Across the school, the pupils are developing clear ideas of right and wrong in their own and others' behaviour and how what they do influences and impacts on the world and others. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress because they have the instructions, encouragement and praise spoken in Sylheti as well as English.

168. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The excellent morning 'Hello' and end-of-school 'Goodbye' sessions, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3 help to develop pupils' social skills, by asking the group to focus on each individual in turn. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 builds on the very good work done in the Nursery. Teachers work on pupils' personal targets throughout the day, not just in the identified personal / social education lessons. Good use is made of symbol cards for pupils to indicate a need, for example collecting the card to show a teacher a trip to the toilet is needed, or choosing the drink or finish card at snack-time or lunch. Behaviour is improved by adherence to calm measured reactions. For example, the pupil who regularly throws her food on the floor was calmly told and signed 'biscuits finished'. The pupil accepted the situation and did not misbehave while the others finished their food. The discarded food was cleaned up later, when it drew no attention.
169. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. For example, teachers speak and sign the choices for lunch and pupils indicate what they would like from photos. Pupils are given the responsibility of collecting and returning the register to the school office. Pupils are welcomed to the room with smiles and greetings, drawn together as a class and immediately involved in an activity as a whole group. In the vast majority of classes behaviour targets are carefully, systematically and successfully worked towards, according to the pupils' behaviour programmes. Occasionally, however, with the oldest pupils, staff appear annoyed by pupils' toileting needs, poor behaviour or inability to make progress and made negative comments and inappropriately threaten to withdraw privileges.
170. Lunchtime makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress on their independence targets. The staff encourage pupils to make and communicate their food choices, they then provide whatever level of assistance is necessary. They continually try to improve pupils' feeding ability and work at this throughout lunch. For example, a pupil who is just beginning to use a spoon independently was encouraged to do so even though his food intake was therefore very slow. Another pupil whose spoon use was too erratic had adult guidance for her hand whenever the action became too 'splattery', but the guidance stopped as soon as she regained control and could try again on her own. Pupils' social skills are also encouraged: their attention is drawn to others by comments like "*look at \_\_, he is managing big spoonfuls / is using his fork nicely / has asked for a drink (do you want one?)*".
171. Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work. This is particularly obvious in Years 1 to 3. The more able pupils tackle tasks with interest, respond well to the teacher and other staff, show surprisingly long concentration spans for their ability. They show delight when they have achieved something and welcome the praise they receive. Some pupils are able to be trusted to do simple jobs for the class or to help other pupils. The vast majority of unacceptable behaviour is skilfully re-directed or dealt with by the teacher. Less able pupils accept sensations and experiences that are new and possibly disturbing to them because of the atmosphere of care, calm and trust which exists in most classrooms.

172. Co-ordination of PSHE is good. The curriculum is based mainly on pupils' IEP targets which concentrate on their immediate needs and supports their personal development very well. The curriculum is well supported by trips out of school where pupils have to use different types of transport and eat in public. However, the lack of formal policies for citizenship, drugs or sex education (the latter because of sensitivities in relation to different ethnic groups) means that the curriculum, although very relevant for pupils' personal needs, does not always deal in a comprehensive way with wider issues in PSHE. The school nurse deals with issues which arise about bodily changes or inappropriate pre-sexual behaviour on an individual basis and

opportunities for learning such aspects are also provided as part of science. Other aspects, such as drugs education, are also covered in science. While this has merit, a systematic programme would also help pupils' even greater understanding of ideas and issues.

173. Computer technology is well used in PSHE to support learning. For example, digital photos are used for pupils to make choices and to show they can identify self and others. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has a suitable action plan for strengthening the planning, monitoring and breadth of the subject. There are strong systems for monitoring pupils' development and understanding and these have been strengthened by the introduction of the 'P' levels, as well as the use of IEPs and end of Year 2 and Year 6 independence targets for all children. This means teachers have clear ideas of overall goals for individuals and for groups and all staff reinforce these across the curriculum as well as within specific personal and social education sessions.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the **good** provision for physical education (PE) has been maintained for pupils of all ages.

### Strengths

- Very good provision for swimming which improves mobility and instils confidence.
- Some outstanding teaching which contributes to pupils' spiritual, social and physical development.
- Very good accommodation and resources which support learning well.

### Areas for improvement

- Completion of schemes of work which cover all areas of the curriculum and show progression across the year groups.
- Co-ordinator training especially to increase knowledge of planning for PMLD pupils.

174. The high standards seen in physical education at the time of the last inspection have generally been maintained. Improvement overall is satisfactory. Progress is still good; pupils clearly respond well to the subject and some elements of teaching are outstanding. However, teachers' planning and the management of the subject have not maintained the very good levels seen previously. This means that there is sometimes a lack of equal emphasis on all aspects of physical education. Schemes of work, supporting pupils' progress across year groups and support staff who teach the subject when colleagues are absent, are not yet sufficiently detailed. There is very effective planning for swimming.
175. Pupils achieve well. This is because they take part in a wide variety of physical activities that are usually planned well to extend their levels of mobility and stamina. All pupils clearly enjoy movement so this has a positive effect on achievement. They sometimes laugh aloud with pleasure, for example when successfully striking a ball or blowing bubbles in the pool. By the end of Year 2 pupils, sometimes with significant assistance, roll, throw and catch a ball. They take turns and follow instructions to travel along, over or under apparatus. The most mobile pupils balance carefully on a bench, bounce enthusiastically on the trampoline and crawl unaided through the tunnel. As pupils get older they increase their control and co-ordination. High numbers of well-trained and effective support staff contribute significantly to good achievement.



This helps pupils with PMLD to achieve well. They indicate by gesture and expression that they enjoy and want to repeat a range of activities exercising their limbs and which includes rolling, rocking and swinging. By the end of Year 6 pupils take part in simple team activities using well-adapted resources when necessary. They strike and field a ball, work hard to improve their performance and congratulate each other on success. Pupils with PMLD are assisted to achieve equally well. Adapted resources such as wrist supports for bats allow pupils to hit a balloon and take turns in team games with some pupils clearly understanding and enjoying the competitive element of physical education.

176. Achievement in swimming is a strength. By the end of Year 2 the physically able pupils travel unaided across the pool using a variety of leg or arm kicks. Pupils with PMLD tolerate immersion in water and co-operate when being pulled through the water on their fronts or backs. By the end of Year 6 a small number of pupils propel themselves unaided across the pool. Pupils with PMLD make good attempts to splash and with support float on their fronts and backs. The high quality of the hydrotherapy pool, including a hoist to lower pupils gently and safely into the pool and a highly structured swimming programme contribute to this success. Sufficient numbers of competent well-trained and highly motivated staff ensure that swimming is not only therapeutic and meeting individual needs, but also a time of pure enjoyment in which all share.
177. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The major strength in lessons is the teamwork of all adults whose training gives them the confidence and knowledge to move and support pupils who often have high levels of physical dependency. This gives pupils the trust to enjoy experiencing a wide range of activities from gentle stretching exercises to outdoor and adventurous activities. Learning is particularly good in swimming where pupils often overcome initial reluctance to welcoming the sessions with obvious enthusiasm. In a lesson where the teaching was excellent, characterised by harmony and respect for individual needs, pupils successfully met their personal targets. Each pupil worked with an adult but was conscious of being part of a larger group. Singing throughout the lesson reinforced numeracy, and developed language as well as making movements such as floating or leg kicks fun. The faces of pupils registered happiness, and relationships were of the highest quality. Teaching could be improved by more attention to the use of PE kit, such as for gymnastics, and improvements in teachers' knowledge. In some lessons, the pupils and staff do not dress appropriately for PE and the adults' ability to act as role models for some pupils to recognise for the subject is limited. In addition, a few teachers do not demonstrate the good subject knowledge that is generally typical in the school. This means that pupils are more hesitant about attempting activities and do not make as much progress as they could.
178. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is newly appointed to the post and has not yet had time to re-write the scheme of work that is in need of updating in line with the 2000 National Curriculum programme of study. It is intended that this will then show all staff which activities are to be covered at any given time and will be helpful to teachers new to a class. At the moment schemes of work do not include all year groups and do not cover all aspects of the curriculum, such as dance. He has also not yet had sufficient opportunity for observation of, or the training in, teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities. This means that support and advice for colleagues are therefore limited. Planning for swimming, which is based on the *Halliwick* swimming programme, is very good. This is because there is clearly planned progression for pupils of differing physical abilities and mobility. Procedures for recording the gains in learning made by pupils are unsatisfactory and some reports do not tell parents clearly enough what pupils have achieved although some use very good photographic evidence.
179. The subject contributes very well to pupils' social development, especially through very successful activities such as the residential visit and the occasional opportunities to meet with other schools in competition. The high quality accommodation and resources contribute well to learning, although there could be more planned use of outdoor equipment for adventurous activities. However, the residential visit contributes superbly to this in providing highly challenging activities. Staff are proficient in implementing physical programmes and this should encourage closer links between physiotherapy and activities in the subject.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
- Teaching is good and staff create imaginative lessons to engage the pupils.
- The locally agreed syllabus is used and staff assess the pupils well, adapting the programme to their needs.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure equality of opportunity for all classes in terms of curriculum time.
- Inconsistency in identifying what pupils need to know, understand and can do in each year.

180. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory in all years and progress has been maintained since the last inspection. The good teaching and learning is not fully reflected in pupils' achievements because planning is not as detailed as it could and does not always sufficiently build on pupils' prior learning. Pupils in Year 1 learn about themselves and their world through poems and stories. They recognise and express pleasure when they see the things they like and are taught the value of sharing as, for instance, when they share bowls of fruit. In Year 2, pupils looking in a mirror can see themselves and know that that person before them is valued and is loved by their mum and their God.
181. As pupils move through the school and into Year 6 they have opportunities to learn about different religions. In learning about Islam, the younger pupils learn about the importance of the ritual washing before prayer, of facing East and kneeling on a prayer mat to pray to Allah. All pupils experience the ritual, the higher attaining ones doing so with a greater degree of independence. Those with PMLD do so with support. Year 5 pupils learn about Diwali and the Festival of light through the Hindu story of Rama and the Demon King. After hearing the story they learn the sign for 'Hindu' and have the chance to practice it. Pupils are taught about Christianity. They learn that the Bible is the Holy Book and that The Cross has importance in the Christian religion. They develop an understanding about the nature of good and bad actions in relation to themselves and others. The lower attaining pupils recognise pictures showing happiness and sadness. Higher attaining pupils realise from the pictures that certain actions cause happiness or sadness in other people. They learn that the Bible tries to encourage actions that cause happiness in others. All pupils are taught about the places that are important to each religion and have opportunities to visit places of worship. In assemblies the whole school celebrates festivals from many religions such as Eid, Christmas, Harvest, and Diwali. These assemblies make a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A collection of video films show how well the special celebratory assemblies are valued and supported by parents.
182. Teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Teachers know their pupils well and create imaginative resources, which enable them to participate at many levels. Communication and literacy are taught well. Signing and symbols are used appropriately and relevant props are introduced which bring the lessons to life. For instance, pupils learning about Diwali dress up and act out the story which they see projected onto a screen and surrounded by light. They enjoy acting the parts of the *Monkey King*, of dressing like the *Princess Sita* or the *Demon King*. Mirrors are used with the younger pupils to enable them to see themselves and to understand who it is who is loved by the parents or by God. Pupils taking part in the Nativity to celebrate Christmas enjoy dressing in long robes and acting out the Christmas story. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is very limited and could be used to further enhance learning opportunities in this subject.
183. There is a sound religious education policy and pupils follow the Tower Hamlets Agreed Syllabus. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has plans for modifying it to ensure that it is broken down into smaller steps and this would enable the teachers to identify assessment opportunities at the planning stage. However, the assessment of pupils from day to day is good. All pupils have lessons in religious education, but the co-ordinator needs to monitor the teaching to ensure that all pupils within each key stage spend the same amount of time on the subject.
184. Pupils enjoy this subject and relationships in class are very good. Staff and learning assistants work very well together to support the pupils and pupils clearly enjoy their lessons.