

INSPECTION REPORT

EARLSMEAD FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

South Harrow

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102219

Headteacher: Ms Pam Naish

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 October 2003

Inspection number: 256014

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and middle
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 12
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 429

School address: Arundel Drive
South Harrow
Harrow
Postcode: HA2 8PW

Telephone number: 0208 864 5546
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Robin Tullo

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much bigger than the average primary school, with 429 pupils aged 4 to 12. It has expanded substantially since the last inspection (when there were 290 pupils) and, at the same time, the ethnic composition of the school has changed dramatically so that it is now much more diverse. With expansion, the school has been obliged to take large groups of pupils who have been excluded from other schools or were at risk of exclusion, so it faces challenges that were not present at the last inspection. About a quarter of the pupils are white British; the next biggest group is Asian or Asian British (Indian); the rest of the pupils are Black Caribbean, Black African, white European, Chinese or of mixed heritage. There are 32 refugees and asylum seekers, and pupil mobility is high. Just over a quarter of the pupils (which is very high) speak English as an additional language and are at an early stage in learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average; the number with a statement of special educational needs is average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average but local authority data show that most pupils come from areas of known social deprivation and overcrowding. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average.

The school is registered for childcare provision, in the form of out-of-school care for 32 children under the Children Act 1989. Community provision is also available at the school: adult education (ICT and yoga), a family learning programme (parent partnerships / catch up) and family support services (parenting groups).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; Art
9835	Glenda Spencer	Lay inspector	
22147	Anne Holland	Team inspector	Geography; History; Physical education
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science; Modern foreign languages (French); Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This very caring school enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development and provides a sound education. The school has successfully managed a major increase in numbers and a change in the characteristics of its intake in the last few years. Although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; a significant proportion of the teaching during the inspection was at least good. There have been some staffing difficulties and these adversely affected results in 2003 tests. The school is led well and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are that:

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and a stimulating curriculum.
- The school is very successful in including a significant number of pupils who have previously been excluded or were at risk of exclusion from other schools.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their social skills and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties achieve well.
- Standards are below the national average and were very low in recent tests in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6.
- The school does not challenge higher-attaining pupils sufficiently.
- The headteacher and deputy head are effective leaders who have established a positive ethos and inspired the commitment of the whole staff; subject co-ordinators do not play a full role in raising standards.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected, in March 1998. Standards have been largely sustained, in spite of a change in the school's intake, with more pupils with low prior attainment. Good improvement has been made in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Most teachers now manage behaviour effectively, although not all consistently implement the behaviour policy. The role of subject co-ordinators is still developing, partly because there have been a number of staff changes and several co-ordinators have taken on new responsibilities recently.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	E	C	C
mathematics	D	D	D	D
science	C	E	E	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 7 but higher-attaining pupils do not always do as well as they could. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Those for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily but pupils new to the language and in the early stages of learning English progress well. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and well in other areas of learning; they are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception. In National Curriculum tests in 2002, pupils reached standards in Year 6 tests that were below average in mathematics, well below average in science but average in English. Comparisons with similar schools are unreliable because of the high mobility rate. Results

in 2003 were similar to those in 2002, except that results in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6 were very low. Standards overall are below average in all subjects in Years 1 to 7, except in ICT and French and in English in Years 5 to 7, where they are average.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have good attitudes to school and most behave well although a minority behave inappropriately at times. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education. Teaching is satisfactory. Although pupils' work and test results show that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there was a significant proportion of good and some very good teaching during the inspection. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, in French, in English in Years 5 and 6 and in most lessons in Year 7; it is good in ICT. The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment opportunities. The school cares for its pupils very well and offers them a great deal of support. Partnership with parents is good, although the school has not been able to establish a positive relationship with all its parents. The school is actively involved in community projects and has good links with other educational establishments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her deputy provide effective leadership and have established a positive ethos amongst pupils and staff. Management is satisfactory overall: managing the school's expansion and coping with the intake of some very challenging pupils have taken the school's attention to some extent away from raising standards and there is a need now for greater focus on this aspect of development. The governing body works effectively to support and challenge the school but does not monitor its work in detail.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are satisfied with the school's work and some support it well but a significant minority of parents are highly critical of the way things are done. The inspection supports parents' views about higher-attaining pupils not being challenged enough but does not support most other critical views. Pupils are generally positive and enthusiastic about what the school has to offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important measures the school should take to improve are to:

- Raise standards, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Improve provision for higher-attaining pupils.
- Strengthen the role of co-ordinators in order to make teaching and learning more consistently good.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Finalise the race equality policy, monitor its implementation and report findings to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Standards are below average overall in Years 1 to 7, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory and there are signs of an improvement in standards in some subjects. Standards are average and achievement is good in ICT and French and in English in Years 5 and 6; it is often good in lessons in Year 7. Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough and do not do as well as they could.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in response to very good teaching and a stimulating curriculum.
- Standards are below the national average and were very low in recent tests in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Those for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily; pupils new to the country and in the early stages of learning English progress well.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged consistently and the school does not have an effective strategy for meeting their needs.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and well in other areas of learning. Although children enter the school with below average prior attainment, they are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception and they may well exceed expectations in reading.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (14.2)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.1 (14.9)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In 2002, the school's test results were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards from 1998 to 2002 remained about the same, despite the school's change in intake. Given pupils' below average prior attainment, results in reading, writing, mathematics and science in 2002 at Level 2 show that the school did well by its lower and average attainers. It was at Level 3 that the school did less well, being pulled to well below average in reading and science and below average in writing and mathematics because of low results at Level 3. This fits in with inspection findings that higher-attaining pupils are not challenged as much as they could be and that there are differences in pupils' achievement from one subject to another. Staffing difficulties contributed to the fall in standards in Year 2 tests in 2003.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (25.6)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	26.0 (26.1)	26.7 (26.2)
science	27.2 (26.3)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In National Curriculum tests in 2002, pupils reached standards in Year 6 tests that were below average in mathematics, well below average in science but average in English. Results in 2003 were similar to those in 2002, except that results in mathematics in Year 6 were very low at Level 4 and Level 5 and those in English showed a slight improvement at Level 5. The school explains the disappointing results in mathematics by stating that they stemmed from the weak teaching of inexperienced temporary teachers in Year 5. Despite attempting to support these teachers, who have since left the school, and to put in strategies to raise standards in Year 6, the mathematics results are likely to put the school in the bottom five per cent compared with schools nationally. Standards in mathematics are very low for the small number of pupils currently in Year 7.
4. The trend in the school's Year 6 results has been broadly in line with the national trend in the five years up to 2002. Achievement as revealed by Year 6 tests in 2002 was satisfactory overall. English results in 2002 and 2003 reflect good achievement when pupils' attainment on entry and the increase in pupils who are at an early stage in learning English are taken into account. The local education authority analyses show that even in 2003, pupils' achievement was satisfactory from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Pupils who join the school other than at the usual time of admission usually reach lower standards than those who have been in the school throughout their education, but this reflects the low prior attainment of many of these pupils. In English and science, girls have done better than boys in recent years but not consistently so. The inspection did not find clear evidence of differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Nor did it find a tangible explanation for the higher performance of Indian pupils, beyond that provided by parental support.
5. In 2003, the school did not quite meet its Year 6 target in English at Level 4 but slightly exceeded its target at Level 5. It fell far short of its mathematics targets at Level 4 and Level 5. The 2004 targets are challenging, given the 2003 results, and may be unrealistically high in view of the shift in the school's intake and pupils' below average attainment on entry.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because of the caring and inclusive atmosphere in the school and the quality of the support they receive. However, individual education plan targets are not always broken down into small enough steps for pupils to achieve them within a reasonable time limit.
7. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils who are at early stages in learning English make good progress and achieve well because teaching is good in intensive withdrawal sessions. Pupils who join during the school year, having no previous schooling in this country and knowing little or no English, make good progress.
8. Parents at the meeting with the registered inspector expressed concern that higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. The inspection finds that the school does not do enough to enable its highest attaining pupils to fulfil their potential through its curriculum planning or by ensuring that teachers match tasks and methods consistently to these pupils' prior attainment.
9. The school is tackling the need to raise standards by continuing to develop positive behaviour, providing for groups of pupils who experience particular social and emotional difficulties and

piloting innovative ways of working to engage pupils' interest. Already, its success in gaining pupils' interest in learning through these and similar means is apparent. Satisfactory action is being taken to identify pupils who may just miss gaining a particular level in the National Curriculum tests and the school puts in place a range of appropriate support strategies for these pupils. On a whole-school level, however, there is a need for greater attention to be given to raising standards and improving pupils' academic achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils make good progress in their personal development, and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have good attitudes to school and most behave well although a minority behave inappropriately at times. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have good attitudes to school and these contribute to their achievement.
- The school has high expectations for behaviour and manages challenging behaviour very well.
- Staff foster good relationships by valuing pupils as individuals.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to work together and to take responsibility.
- The school provides no clear guidance to staff on how to deal with bullying.

Commentary

10. Pupils are happy to come to school and most willingly co-operate with teachers and each other. Many pupils are eager to succeed and contribute well in lessons because they find teachers encouraging. The majority of pupils enjoy what the school has on offer and are keen to take responsibility. A minority lose concentration when they are not directly supervised or where teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils are proud of their school and feel it is important that their behaviour is a good reflection of this. Most pupils behave well because staff have high expectations but a minority of teachers take insufficient action to deal with the minority of pupils who misbehave at times. The school rules, based on politeness and respect for others, are the basis for class rules – which each class devised with the help of their teachers. The many structures put in place to encourage good behaviour especially for pupils who join the school as a result of exclusion are good. The school has been very successful in largely resolving the behavioural problems that were a result of taking a significant number of pupils who had either been excluded or were at risk of exclusion from other schools. It manages challenging behaviour very effectively and takes preventative measures wherever it can to pre-empt disruption. Very few pupils have been excluded in the past two years, and inspection findings indicate that the concerns some parents raised about lessons being disrupted by inappropriate behaviour now appear to be unfounded.

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	103	5	2
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	12	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	88	0	0

Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - other	32	0	0
Black or black British - Caribbean	24	0	0
Black or black British - African	19	1	0
Black or black British - other	12	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Other ethnic group	11	0	0
Information not obtained	16	0	0

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

11. Relationships are good as a result of the friendly and supportive ethos and most pupils are caring towards each other. Pupils play together in harmony; many pupils were seen at playtime sharing and showing genuine concern for each other. The school fosters a spirit of co-operation when pupils are working together and many opportunities for group work were seen during the inspection. All pupils are valued as individuals, regardless of their race, background or ability; most pupils value one another.
12. Parents at the meeting and a number of others who wrote letters expressing their views before the inspection raised concerns about bullying. In the questionnaires that pupils completed, a number also made reference to overly boisterous behaviour. Pupils interviewed during the inspection said that bullying is not tolerated and they are confident that, when bullying does occur, staff take appropriate action. No direct evidence of bullying came to light during the inspection, so it is impossible to judge how much actually occurs. The school has not documented its bullying procedures clearly enough, however. There is no bullying policy, just a brief statement about bullying as part of the behaviour policy. As a result, there is no way of ensuring that all staff take a sufficiently firm and consistent approach to any incidents of bullying that come to their attention. The school has provided good teaching about bullying as part of personal, social and health education.
13. Pupils' moral development is good as a result of staff providing effective role models for pupils and promoting appropriate values. Pupils display good social skills, and those who entered the school with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have made very good progress in their social development as a result of the very good structures that are put in place to help and guide pupils. They are aware of right and wrong, and have respect for different faiths and beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves. In a published book, *Our World, Many Voices*, containing writing by pupils in the school, their feelings, prayers and thoughts shows care and understanding for the needy. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There are links with the church and opportunities for reflection in assemblies. In and around the school are examples of many religions; a very good display of stories from the Bible in the reception area of the school reflects this. Pupils are taught to be responsible members of the school and the community, and the school council is active in decision-making. Cultural development is good with visits by parents representing different cultural backgrounds, visits to museums, the curriculum coverage of Egypt and religious festivals.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

14. The attendance rate in the last year was above the national average, although the rate of unauthorised absence was above that found in most other schools. Efforts are made by the school to support parents in ensuring that they send their children to school. The majority of pupils are very punctual to school and quickly settle to work on arrival.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a sound education. Teaching is satisfactory overall and a significant amount was good during the inspection. The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment opportunities. The school cares for its pupils very well and offers them a great deal of support. Partnership with parents is good, although the school has not been able to establish a positive relationship with all its parents. The school is actively involved in community projects.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and much of the teaching was good during the inspection. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are signs that teaching is improving now that the school has entered a more stable staffing situation than it has had recently.
- When pupils learning English as an additional language are withdrawn from lessons for intensive support, the teaching is good.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, but targets in individual education plans are not always specific enough.
- Teachers do not always challenge higher-attaining pupils sufficiently.
- Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory but marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

15. Although pupils' work and test results show that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there was a significant proportion of good and some very good teaching during the inspection. This is a good sign that having a more stable staff is having a positive effect on teaching and learning, and should eventually lead to improved standards. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching evident in pupils' work have been adversely affected by staffing difficulties, as revealed by the very low test results in 2003 in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. The school has only a relatively small number of experienced teachers, so a number of subjects are co-ordinated by teachers new to their roles. As a result of these factors, there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and in some subjects - most notably in English - between different year groups. Opportunities for the professional development of teachers are good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	12 (20%)	30 (51%)	15 (26%)	2 (3%)	-	-

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

16. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, in French, English in Years 5 and 6 and in the majority of lessons in Year 7; it is good in ICT. Where teaching is good and sometimes very good, teachers match work closely to pupils' prior attainment and have high expectations in the tasks they set and the response they require. In these lessons, pupils invariably respond well and show interest. All teachers enjoy positive relationships with pupils, use good questioning skills and try to make learning enjoyable.

17. Where teaching is satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory, teachers turn a 'blind eye' to inappropriate behaviour and do not match work sufficiently to pupils' needs or have high enough expectations. Teachers sometimes set different learning objectives for higher-attaining pupils but they often do the same work as average attainers and, in the foundation subjects, all pupils sometimes undertake identical tasks irrespective of prior attainment. Teachers are not given any clear guidance about what they are expected to do for gifted and talented pupils, so this group of pupils does not achieve as well as it could across the curriculum.
18. The quality of teaching received by pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and that for pupils who are at early stages of learning English is good. These pupils are given intensive group tuition in withdrawal groups. The teacher explains the key subject vocabulary well and presents work with a strong visual content; this results in pupils' good achievement. Pupils' home language is also used whenever possible and this enhances learning. Teachers have a positive attitude to the diversity of languages present in the school and this adds significantly to bilingual pupils' ease. As a result, they are willing to learn and participate in lessons and to express their ideas confidently. All pupils with English as an additional language are assessed and their stages of language acquisition are determined and recorded. The assessment data is used well to monitor and track pupils' progress as well as to determine how much additional support they need.
19. Teachers and learning support assistants plan carefully for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment in numeracy and literacy but they are given regular opportunities to work with higher-attaining pupils to improve their language and social skills. A good team of skilled and very competent learning support assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve well in many lessons. Assessments are carried out thoughtfully and staff are aware of pupils' programmes and any additional medical needs. Pupils are closely involved in the identification of targets in their individual education plans but targets are not always divided into sufficiently precise and measurable steps.
20. The school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory. There is some useful analysis of test results, very well supported by the detailed analyses made available to the school by the local education authority. More could be done, however, to ensure that data is shared promptly with all staff and that they know how to use assessment information in planning. Portfolios of evidence are collated for English, mathematics and science; those for other subject areas are generally at an earlier stage of development. Some teachers mark pupils' work carefully, making clear what they should do to improve, and the school is currently undertaking 'action research' in this area. There is a tendency for some teachers to give undue praise to unremarkable work, to ignore pupils' failure to complete corrections, and to miss opportunities to explain to pupils what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

A sound curriculum is complemented by some good enrichment opportunities. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It provides well for most of its pupils but not well enough for gifted and talented and higher-attaining pupils. The school is involved in a range of initiatives to improve pupils' learning experiences. Accommodation and learning resources are good overall; staffing is adequate, following a period of turbulence.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.
- It makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and does especially well by pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory.
- There are good enrichment opportunities during and outside the school day and a number of innovative practices have been introduced.
- Curriculum planning needs to be further developed to raise standards.

Commentary

21. The provision that the school makes for pupils who are at early stages in learning English as an additional language is good. The school is successful in providing a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards other cultures and languages. Pupils have good opportunities to gain confidence about their culture through religious education, assemblies, music, dance, history, geography, art and celebrations such as Black History Month. There are many notices, signs and books in other languages to show that the school values other cultures and languages.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because pupils have their individual needs met but are also included well in the life of the school. There is very good provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties through the skilful direction of the behaviour management programme and anger management groups. Pupils are noticeably calmer when they return to class after these sessions. Good development of intervention strategies, such as the challenge project, behaviour support, anger management and parenting groups, reflects the inclusive nature of the school and benefits many pupils and their families. The school meets the recommendations of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs well and pupils are fully involved in discussions when decisions are being made.
23. The school includes higher-attaining pupils in a list of pupils who might need additional support. It does not, however, have a policy setting out how it intends to provide for its gifted and talented pupils or set clear expectations for teachers. It makes no specific provision for them within school or through regular specific projects that stimulate independent learning at home or through activities outside lesson time¹. As a result, this group of pupils are not served as well as their peers and do not have consistently equal opportunities to realise their potential.
24. The curriculum is enriched effectively by a number of educational visits and visitors. The school also benefits from a range of visitors to the school, including local clergy and parents. It has taken part in an initiative called 'web play', which provides opportunities for pupils to use the Internet to connect with pupils of a similar age across the globe, and gives another dimension to cross-curricular ICT and literacy. A number of clubs take place outside normal hours and the school has responded very well to the needs of the local community with its breakfast club and after-school club.
25. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects; a number of these are in the process of being refined. Planning for all subjects is satisfactory, with weekly and medium-term plans providing satisfactory guidance for the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The school makes generally satisfactory use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in English and mathematics. Personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship are actively promoted, both within discrete PSHE lessons and within and

¹ The school did provide one opportunity for gifted and talented pupils to be challenged through a special mathematics activity.

across other subjects. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good and fully prepares children for entry into the National Curriculum. The school has rightly identified the need to develop further its cross-curricular links.

Care, guidance and support

The school has very good procedures for ensuring that pupils are well cared for and it ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. It provides good support, advice and guidance and has satisfactory systems for monitoring pupils' achievement and development. The school actively seeks to involve pupils in its work and development, especially through the school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for and staff's understanding of child protection is very good.
- Pupils joining the school with social, emotional and behavioural problems are put on one of the school's many positive programmes to modify their behaviour.
- Pupils' views are sought on aspects of school planning and they feel that their contributions are valued.
- The school provides good support to pupils who are learning English as an additional language and who have special educational needs.

Commentary

26. The last inspection found that provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare was a strength of the school, this remains the case. Pupils know they are important and matter within the school community because the emphasis is on caring for the needs of individuals. The positive support and guidance ensure pupils are happy and feel secure, which has a most positive effect on their learning and achievement. Support for pupils with particular difficulties is especially good. The school works closely with parents from the outset. Parents' responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting confirm that arrangements for pupils to settle in when they start school are good. Clear guidelines ensure consistency across the school concerning matters such as child protection, discipline and first aid, but not bullying. Informal monitoring is carried out but some systems of recording are too informal.
27. Pupils know that their views are important and respected because they are encouraged to partake regularly in discussions about aspects of school development. The school council is composed of representatives from each class, and members of the school council meet with the headteacher to discuss various issues. Members of the council take their role very seriously, just as the school does. The buddy system aims to ensure that no one is lonely when joining the school and this is particularly valuable given the high mobility rate amongst pupils. Monitors help in and around the school as requested by their teachers. Certificates are given weekly in the achievement assembly, not just for good work but also for kindness and consideration. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for younger ones.
28. Support for personal development and achievement is good. Staff share welfare and personal information about pupils effectively. Home-school diaries are used well for feeding back information for parents and receiving their concerns. Pupils know who to talk to if and when they need support; staff know the pupils in their care and encourage them to develop confidence and to increase their self-esteem. Circle time and the anger management programme are used very effectively to discuss aspects of personal development. Each child has personal targets but these do not yet influence some pupils' learning as much as they might.
29. The school has a very supportive environment for pupils with special educational needs and makes very good use of its close links with a number of other agencies. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well integrated in school life; mutual respect and tolerance of others' values underpin the strong relationships within the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good partnership with most parents, although a minority of parents remain highly critical of the school's work. Very good links with the community and a good working relationship with other educational establishments underpin the education the school provides.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information provided to parents about the school and how well their children are doing is good.
- Links with parents contribute well to pupils' learning at home and at school.
- Parental involvement through the Parents' and Teachers' Association and help in school is good.
- The school has not found a way of working with the significant minority of parents (about 10 per cent) who are critical of its work.
- The school is very active in working to improve facilities and services within the local community.

Commentary

30. Many of the parents who attended the meeting before the inspection and who wrote letters were very critical about the school. They were most concerned about what they regard as the limited challenge provided for higher-attaining pupils; bullying; disruptive behaviour in some classes; and the leadership of the school. Inspection findings support the view that more should be done to extend higher-attaining pupils. No direct evidence of bullying came to light during the inspection, so it is impossible to be sure how much bullying actually occurs; the school does need to tighten up its procedures for dealing with bullying. Behaviour is usually good and lessons were not disrupted by bad behaviour; the school has done very well to absorb a number of pupils with challenging behaviour. The inspection found that the school is led well overall but senior managers have not been able to form a positive relationship with this significant minority of parents.
31. The majority of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire, were positive about the school. Staff place significant importance on the partnership between home and school and encourage parental participation. The governors' report to parents highlights many ways in which parents can help and support their children. Several parents help regularly in school and on trips and the Parent Teacher Association seeks ideas for fundraising from all parents. It has raised substantial sums to purchase laptops, a television, video recorders and CD players for the benefit of all the pupils.
32. The school prospectus is comprehensive and provides good information for parents. Parents are given good information about the curriculum on a termly basis; target-setting meetings are regular and the informative newsletter contains additional information about parenting courses and fundraising events. Parents are invited to share in their children's achievements and Friday open assemblies are well attended by parents who contribute to celebrations such as Diwali, Ramadan and the Autumn thanksgiving.
33. Parents are encouraged to meet class teachers if they have a concern as soon as possible so that any problems can be resolved quickly. Most parents find the school approachable. Parents taking their children on holidays during term time are given support on their return. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress through school reports, which are personal to each child and show the extent to which teachers know the pupils. Welfare staff play a very important part in the good communication between home and school.
34. The school makes every effort to involve the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language in all school activities. The staff, pupils and parents who can speak more than one language help as interpreters for others if and when required. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in any discussions about their child's progress and in planning future support.

35. The school has very close links with the community and is wholly committed to improving the facilities available within the locality. It has recently become a part of a Local Public Service Agreement, whereby headteachers are working with social and voluntary service groups to regenerate the area. The school already provides family learning opportunities in yoga and ICT; the latter has contributed to pupils' good achievement in ICT. Teachers who work with pupils from ethnic minorities run workshops for parents and the school has evidence that those who attend the sessions are sharing this information with other parents. In collaboration with the Harrow Child and Mental Health Service, the school has set up a parenting group which supports parents in managing their children's behaviour. Parental evaluations of these initiatives show their appreciation for the help and advice provided. This very good support has a significant impact on the learning and development of pupils concerned.
36. Links with local schools and other educational establishments are good. The local schools support network enables the sharing of knowledge and expertise that benefit all pupils. The Foundation Stage teacher provides advice and guidance to local playgroups on planning and assessment and the school is beginning to see the positive impact of this on the four-year-olds who are joining the school. An advanced skills teacher at the school works closely with a university in the training and mentoring of new teachers. Links with the main high school to which pupils transfer are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Management is satisfactory. The governing body works effectively to support and challenge the school but has limited procedures for monitoring the school's work at first-hand.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher inspires the staff and has high expectations for the school.
- The development plan does not focus sufficiently on raising standards, and policies – though based on worthy principles – do not always determine the procedures to be followed.
- The school has some good systems for reviewing its performance.
- The co-ordination of special educational needs and English as an additional language is good.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is still not developed sufficiently as a means of raising standards.
- The governing body provides good support and challenge to senior managers and is closely involved in decision-making but less so in direct monitoring.
- The school does not fully meet the requirements of race equality legislation.

Commentary

37. The headteacher, ably supported by the complementary skills of the deputy, has been successful in leading the school through a period of major expansion in terms of pupil numbers and the further development of the school's accommodation. Together, the headteacher and deputy have been particularly effective in stabilising the school during and following the intake of significant numbers of pupils with challenging behaviour. The headteacher has inspired the staff and built a strong sense of commitment and teamwork. As a result, all who work in the school show a dedication and sensitivity towards pupils who might otherwise have been excluded from mainstream education, and the school provides well for pupils' personal development, as well as offering a considerable amount of support to parents. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school, which include the intention that all pupils should fulfil their academic potential.
38. The current development plan has been effective in so far as it has stimulated senior managers, staff and governors in exploring and clarifying the vision. As part of this process, they tackled fundamental issues about the society in which pupils of today live and the

implications this has for education. In many respects, this was a courageous exercise, revealing the level of dedication the school has to meeting the needs of the 'whole child'. It also shows the extent to which all staff are involved in considering and contributing to the school's mission; this fact is further evident in the award for the second time of Investor in People status. The school development plan does not give sufficient focus to raising standards. Some of the school's policies have a similar tendency to be about underlying principles – albeit worthy ones – rather than setting out for staff the clear expectations by which all should work. This gives rise to a very positive climate in which all staff feel involved and show real commitment, but in which the drive to raise standards and sharpen practice is not sufficiently central to everyone's thinking.

39. The school has a quite sophisticated system for reviewing, evaluating and developing work in subject areas. Within this, there is much good practice and the local education authority plays a vital role in supporting the school's own review. Core subjects are reviewed quite regularly but the timetable for future reviews shows that some subjects will wait a considerable time before they receive focused evaluation. The work of each teacher is monitored appropriately through performance management and there are satisfactory arrangements for ongoing monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has introduced recently a system of peer observation whereby teachers observe each other's lessons and discuss what has emerged.
40. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is co-ordinated effectively, and the co-ordination of mathematics, science and ICT is good. Overall, subject co-ordinators and the co-ordinators of the first and middle school are not having sufficient impact, however, on raising standards or ensuring the quality of all aspects of the performance of staff in their teams. Many co-ordination roles are filled by staff who have either taken on the responsibilities recently or not been in the school for very long – the school has only a small number of experienced and long-serving staff and it uses them well. Newly appointed co-ordinators do not all understand how to use data to raise standards. It is clear that the co-ordination of art and design and design and technology is affected adversely by lack of subject knowledge so that pupils' achievement is too dependent on the work of individual teachers.
41. The governing body is closely involved in discussions about school development and there are a number of working groups comprising staff and governors. In this way, governors interact with the whole staff more than is often found and this aspect of practice is good. The headteacher feels very well supported by the governing body and governors monitor the budget thoroughly. The school is prudent in the management of its finances; as a result, it is well resourced and able to respond to changing circumstances. Individual governors challenge the school and have undertaken relevant training. There are named governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy, ICT and special educational needs; some governors visit the school to look at its work but there is not an established programme of monitoring by governors. The governing body does not, therefore, have a means of finding out at first hand about aspects of practice that would help to inform future decision-making.
42. Statutory requirements are met, except that the school has only a draft race equality policy. It is, therefore, not yet monitoring the effectiveness of its race equality procedures or reporting findings to parents.
43. Since the last inspection, the school has had staffing difficulties, been faced with a major expansion, had to cope with an increase in the number of pupils with behavioural difficulties and now has a more ethnically diverse population. These factors have acted as a barrier to raising standards, because they have all taken up a great deal of senior managers' time. The school should now be in a position to put much greater emphasis on the academic side of its work.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,204,649
Total expenditure	1,218,725
Expenditure per pupil	2,840.85

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	62,429
Balance carried forward to the next	48,353

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children achieve very well during their time in the Foundation Stage because teaching is very good, the curriculum is stimulating and varied and the teacher and nursery nurse both have an exceptionally good knowledge of the needs of this age group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage teacher is a leading Early Years teacher in the local education authority and provides valuable advice to playgroups on planning and assessment. Her own planning is of high quality, ensuring that children learn in an environment that offers structured adult-led sessions and ample opportunity for free choice and independent learning. Detailed observational notes of children's development are used to very good effect to plan future teaching. Although children's prior attainment is below average when they enter the Foundation Stage, they are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and should exceed expectations in reading and possibly in some other areas of development. The current very good teaching in the Foundation Stage should give children an exceptionally good start and help the school to raise standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is made fun so that children frequently learn without even realising they are doing so.
- The very good progress children make is based on high quality relationships with staff.
- Children are very happy and motivated; they are already confident learners who respond quickly to challenging tasks.

Commentary

44. Although the children currently in the Foundation Stage were admitted only a few weeks before the inspection, they have settled in exceptionally well and take part with equal confidence in whole group activities or select from a range of options. They behave very well and are learning to work together as well as initiating their own activities. Their very good achievement is based on trusting relationships with the teacher and nursery nurse, who are warm, humorous and encouraging but at the same time provide challenging learning opportunities. In whole class sessions that focus, for instance, on literacy and numeracy, the teacher makes learning such fun that children are swept along by the activity and make rapid progress without even realising that anything serious is going on. They are highly responsive and show a genuine thirst for knowledge. They are ready to attempt the most challenging tasks, because the teacher reassures them by saying, 'It doesn't matter if you get it wrong, because we are all here to learn'.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expectations are very high and this is leading to children's rapid progress, especially in reading.
- Children's early writing skills and their language development are also promoted very well.

Commentary

45. Children have well below average control of a pencil when they enter the Foundation Stage and only a minority of pupils can form a few letters. They make rapid progress in recognising letters and learning the letter sounds, to such an extent that children who have been in the school only a few weeks can sound out single syllable words and read a short sentence in unison. A higher-attaining child was able to pick out the word 'school' from the sentence without hesitation. These children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Staff promote children's speaking and listening very effectively, and a very good range of activities is provided to stimulate children's language development. Children have very good opportunities to talk about the 'big book' and the teacher asks very effective questions to extend their vocabulary. She also uses highly effective methods to develop children's writing skills and includes aspects of literacy that are not typically covered until Year 1. Within free choice options, a child decided quite independently to 'make a book' for her friend, carefully forming some recognisable letter shapes and other convincing squiggles, then finishing the 'book' off by carefully drawing a flower.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher's expectations are high and tasks are challenging.
- Children are willing to tackle difficult activities and persevere for significant periods of time.

Commentary

46. Children can already count forwards and backwards to 20. They recognise the numbers 1 to 10 and most know the order in which they should come. A higher-attaining child was able to answer the question of what 20 minus 2 was and another knew that a one and an eight are needed to make 18. The teacher's high expectations were further evident when she taught children how to program the 'Pixie²'. They found this initially difficult, since it involved counting on, but persisted until they had grasped the skills involved. This combination of challenge and children's readiness to learn is leading to very good achievement and children should at least meet the Early Learning Goals within the numeracy aspects of mathematical development by the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities aimed at teaching children about the world around them ensures that they achieve well in this area.
- Good use is made of children's own cultural heritage.

Commentary

47. It is in conversation with the teacher and nursery nurse that children come to understand much about the world. They use programs on the computer, learning to select items from the menu and control the mouse, plant bulbs, find out about Diwali, and join resistant materials with split pins to make a bird. The practice of using aspects of children's home language as part of

² The Pixie is a programmable toy that responds to instructions about how many moves to make in any given direction.

everyday learning is a very positive feature and staff pay careful attention to extending the language skills of children who are learning English as an additional language so that they have words to describe the world around them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

48. From the limited evidence available, children are achieving well in this area from well below average attainment on entry. They are learning to follow instructions in the way they move around the hall and to stop when asked to. Not all children have any real awareness of themselves in space. They have good opportunities to develop their hand-to-eye co-ordination, for instance, using construction toys and threading. The school is necessarily developing further its outside play area to provide additional scope for children's play.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

49. From the evidence available, children are achieving well in this area. They learn to sing familiar songs, for example, to reinforce their counting, and have good opportunities for spontaneous creativity from amongst a range of free choice activities. During the inspection, a child worked absorbedly and independently to create a collage, carefully sticking down kidney beans to represent the rays of the sun.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of younger pupils is satisfactory; accelerated learning takes place in Years 5 and 6 giving rise to average standards.
- Teaching is mostly satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, but good and sometimes very good in Years 5 to 7.
- Recent results in English in Year 2 were very low: teachers do not make as much use as they could of reading to stimulate a wider range of writing activities, provide opportunities for redrafting or implement the National Literacy Strategy consistently.

Commentary

50. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 in response to teaching that is generally sound. Standards in Year 2 are below average, as they were in National Curriculum tests in 2002. Test results in 2003 were very low in writing and lower in reading than in the previous year. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were in line with the national average. In 2003, they were again average with a slight improvement in the number of pupils gaining Level 5. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in most classes in Years 3 and 4 and very well in one class. They make very rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 and achieve well in Year 7. As a result, standards by the end of Years 6 and 7 are average. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants, with the result that they make the same progress as all other members of the class.
51. Most pupils are good listeners. Although these pupils have good speaking skills in a social context, they are less confident in expressing their ideas and opinions in anything approaching a formal situation, with the result that standards in oral work at the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking as they move through Years 3 to 7. Many respond keenly to teachers' questions and in discussions. Opportunities to engage in

simple role-play make a positive contribution to pupils' skills and mean that speaking and listening are average overall by the ends of Years 6 and 7.

52. Phonic and word-building skills are taught well, though – because of their limited reading skills upon entry – pupils continue to have below average reading skills by the end of Year 2. Pupils' under-developed vocabulary impacts on their ability to understand what they are reading. They read a good range of stories, poetry and factual articles in Years 3 to 7. Pupils also take part in silent reading with well-planned guided reading activities making a positive contribution to their reading for understanding. As a result, standards in reading by the ends of Years 6 and 7 are average.
53. Pupils make satisfactory progress in basic literacy in Years 1 and 2. They write about events in their daily lives, and re-tell in writing the stories read to them in class. Although a number of pupils are capable of producing longer pieces of writing, an equal number have problems in producing work of any real length, with some pupils being insecure in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
54. The focus on the development of basic literacy skills continues throughout Years 3 to 7, though some skills are explored in an isolated manner in the lower middle school, rather than being incorporated within a meaningful writing activity. Pupils also take part in a significant number of comprehension activities throughout Years 3 to 7, sometimes on photocopied worksheets. Many of these activities only require brief responses, with the result that higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged appropriately. Although pupils are given the chance to read a good range of literature, reading is not always used in the best way to stimulate pupils and to give them the chance to write in different styles and for different purposes.
55. Pupils plan their work well and writing frames are used to good effect to support lower-attaining pupils. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to re-draft their work in order to improve it. Standards in written work at the ends of Years 6 and 7 are average.
56. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 4, with some good and very good teaching in Years 5, 6 and 7. This accelerates learning in the upper school, and pupils' increasingly positive attitudes to work and their good working relationships with their teachers support their achievement. The school has responded satisfactorily to the National Literacy Strategy, though occasionally some teachers use it in an inconsistent manner. Lessons as a whole are well planned, organised, managed and resourced. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language with good individual support, with timed targets ensuring that pupils work hard, and that lessons move along at a brisk pace. Occasions were observed, however, where pupils were engaged in the same activity immaterial of their prior attainment or knowledge of the English language. Where teaching is very good, pupils have a clear understanding of their own learning, activities are matched to their needs and abilities, and lessons are planned so that each activity extends skills and knowledge in the other.
57. Following a period where a teacher held temporary responsibility for English, the subject has a new co-ordinator. He is not yet in the position to monitor the subject and plan for improvement. Teachers regularly mark and correct pupils' work, though opportunities are lost for pupils to learn from their own mistakes by correcting their errors. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place and all pupils have targets for improvement. Although standards in writing declined in the most recent tests at the end of Year 2, standards as a whole have been maintained since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Although there is no specific policy or strategies in place to develop literacy across the curriculum, some good examples were observed in history and geography during the inspection. Pupils write essays, for instance on 'Was William a good conqueror?' and make some interesting responses to the issue of how cold climates affect people's lives.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils build effectively on their prior learning because the course is very well structured and taught.
- They acquire confidence in their ability to speak and understand French because they start learning the language in Year 4.
- The teacher's use of a range of teaching strategies and resources stimulates pupils' interest.
- Pupils achieve well because lessons are fun.

Commentary

59. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make good progress in learning basic vocabulary and acquiring an understanding of the customs and culture of France. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well. Their learning and achievement help to prepare them well for transition to a secondary school. Pupils who remain at the school in Year 7 achieve very well and the majority will at least reach the expected level by the end of Year 7, and higher-attaining pupils will achieve above this level.
60. Pupils in Year 6 understand simple phrases and count confidently to 30. They enjoy French because they have been learning the language since Year 4 and are feeling more confident about lessons. Higher-attaining pupils know the numbers up to 100. They move sensibly from activities, using a dictionary to check words they have forgotten. The 'carousel' of activities is purposeful and enjoyable; pupils know they will experience every one of them. Pupils try hard to respond to the teacher's questions. They are developing an acceptable accent and listen carefully. Pupils work independently and in small groups, helping each other through the tasks. Higher-attaining pupils move on to more difficult tasks when the basic learning of vocabulary is completed.
61. There is a good balance of reading, writing, listening and speaking activities in Year 7 and pupils make good use of laptop computers to extend their learning. Higher-attaining pupils write paragraphs about themselves, with very little support. The majority of pupils write out a series of answers to questions, using aids more frequently. Pupils respond to instructions, many of which are given in French, and enjoy working out which person someone is talking about, following the clues thoughtfully. There is a very happy and productive atmosphere in lessons.
62. Teaching is very good because the teacher uses her notes on what pupils achieved in the previous lesson to adapt the following lesson. This ensures that there are tasks that match pupils' abilities well. Everyone clearly enjoys the wide range of experiences on the French Day each summer. Pupils in Year 3 are particularly enthusiastic because they know that they start to learn the language in Year 4. There have been good improvements to the subject since the last inspection. These include increased use of computers and higher levels of achievement for pupils because of the very good teaching.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards reached by current Year 6 pupils are better than the previous year's cohort, but they are still below average; standards in Year 2 are also below the national average.
- Teaching has improved from the previous year and is satisfactory overall; during the inspection it was good.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good and the school has appropriately identified using and applying mathematics in problem solving as an area for development.

Commentary

63. Test results in Year 2 were below average overall in 2002 and 2003 because results at Level 3 were below the national average. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are working at a similar standard to previous years but their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support as they work towards their personal targets. Key vocabulary is explained and materials and other objects of reference are used to ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language are able to access the work and achieve alongside their peers.
64. Test results in Year 6 in 2002 were below the national average and were very low in 2003; very few pupils reached Level 5. Standards in Year 6 are currently better than in previous years but they are still below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In some lessons, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and pupils' self-assessment indicates that work is sometimes too easy for them. Standards in Year 7 are very low; a large number of the pupils in this class have special educational needs and three pupils are at an early stage in learning English. Their achievement is satisfactory.
65. By Year 2, most pupils count, order, add and subtract numbers to 20. Pupils know the names of regular shapes. They measure using non-standard units and are beginning to understand about standard units when they measure with rulers. Pupils have used ICT to produce block graphs of their favourite fruit. By Year 6, most pupils are familiar with the four basic rules of number and apply what they know when they work out equivalent fractions. Sometimes, however, pupils who could tackle more demanding work do not receive enough challenge. A significant number are not as confident and secure as they should be in their knowledge of multiplication tables and this slows down their work in problem solving.
66. During the inspection, teaching and learning in Years 1 to 7 was good. Teaching is satisfactory overall, however, because staffing difficulties in the recent past have adversely affected pupils' learning. Teachers of parallel classes plan lessons together, supporting each other. Questions are used well to find out what pupils know and subject vocabulary is explained clearly to ensure that all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, understand the tasks. Relationships are warm and friendly and based upon mutual respect. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are sometimes insufficiently high and, as a result, higher-attaining pupils do not consistently receive work of an appropriate level of difficulty. The ICT suite is used well but computing in the classroom for everyday mathematics is less well established.
67. Assessment is satisfactory. Individual targets for learning are set and pupils have an overview of their achievement but targets are not focused enough to contribute meaningfully to the tracking of pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work includes many encouraging comments but it does not always show pupils what to do to improve. Pupils' progress is

monitored over time and this is used to provide additional support such as 'Springboard' sessions, but the co-ordinator's use of data is not yet rigorous enough.

68. The subject is managed well and led by an experienced teacher. The priority to develop pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics is appropriate. Staffing is more stable now than it was and all adults work well together and share a commitment to raising standards. Above average standards found at the previous inspection have not been maintained as a result of some unsatisfactory teaching in previous years and a change in the school's intake.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils use numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects, although a clear plan is needed if pupils are to derive full benefit. In ICT, younger pupils collect and enter information on a graph, for instance, about their favourite television programmes. In Years 6 and 7, pupils use Excel to enter data in the appropriate cells in the spreadsheets and used formulae to calculate the totals. In history, pupils use a timeline to plot historical events and in geography, they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read an underground tube map. In science, pupils measure flour, salt and water when they observe changes. They make graphs of condensation and evaporation. In art and design, pupils make reference to shapes when they study the work of Mondrian.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although test results in Year 6 are well below average, standards are now improving throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and much of the teaching was good or very good during the inspection.
- The co-ordinator is working effectively to raise standards; greater use could be made of the analysis of test results to give a clearer focus for improvement.

Commentary

70. Standards have varied since the last inspection. In 2002 tests at the end of Year 2, results were average at Level 2 but few pupils reached Level 3; results were similar in 2003. The results for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well below the national average, with a below average number attaining at the higher level. Results for 2003 were very similar. Standards in Year 7 are well below average; indications from the inspection are that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are likely to reach standards closer to the national average.
71. Achievement is satisfactory overall with signs of a steady improvement. Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were mostly good and, as a result, pupils are beginning to build on their previous learning. With frequent, unavoidable changes of staff, some of whom were inexperienced in teaching science, pupils have not consolidated their learning systematically over time. This is now happening, particularly in Years 5 and 6. There are differences between the achievement of boys and girls but this gap has narrowed in 2003. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons and tests because of the good support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily because many of them are still at an early stage of learning English and need to build on their experiences in science to acquire understanding of specific terms.
72. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire a wide range of scientific vocabulary. Skilful questioning and prompts from adults during practical activities encourage pupils to explain why changes in

materials have occurred. This deliberate extension of pupils' thinking and vocabulary is also a feature of most lessons from Years 3 to 7. Adults carefully avoid giving pupils answers but give clues to help lower-attaining pupils join in the lesson effectively. There is a growing emphasis on finding out why things happen in science and the correct words to use to describe the processes. This is leading to increased understanding and an improvement in standards.

73. Pupils benefit from active investigations and the fact that they are expected to do as much as possible independently. Learning support assistants provide valuable support: they encourage pupils to attempt tasks and think them through logically and, because they work so effectively, all groups manage to carry out experiments during the lesson. In a well-organised lesson in Year 6, pupils worked through six interesting activities, including an experiment with yeast. In this experiment, they showed good recall of learning about gases in Year 5 and extended their learning well.
74. Teaching and learning were mostly good, and sometimes very good, because teachers managed the pupils' behaviour effectively and everyone was able to learn. Teachers used their reviews of previous lessons well to adapt the following lesson and this ensured that, on most occasions, tasks matched pupils' prior attainment well. Some good practice in checking learning at the end of a unit of work was seen. Pupils in Year 3 compared what they thought they knew about magnets at the beginning of the term with what they had learned since September. They realised that they now knew quite a lot about different magnets. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrated their uncertainty about evaporation and gases when they made clear group presentations to the class. They were able to discuss their difficulties and managed to clear up a few problems through this exercise. Pupils in Year 7 worked very well in small groups to work out how to carry out their tests.
75. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is anxious to raise standards in science. She encourages teachers to make more use of ICT and include practical work in their lessons. She is aware that it is important that the school analyses the results of statutory tests to obtain a clear focus for further improvement. Although she regularly looks at pupils' work, there is insufficient formal monitoring of the teaching. The school has made satisfactory improvement in science since the last inspection although standards are lower than reported then. There is greater use of ICT and more interactive displays in classrooms than there were at that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards across the school are in line with the national expectations.
- Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching.
- The computer suite is used well but the class computers are underused.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and make good use of ICT across subjects to support and enhance their learning.
- The co-ordinator is new and his role is developing well.

Commentary

76. At the end of Years 2, 6 and 7, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age and their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language achieve similar standards to their peers. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use the computer to write and print poems about their favourite toys and the colours of the autumn leaves. They use a simple graph program to display results about their favourite television programmes. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 use word processing skills to write their school newspaper, use spreadsheets to enter data and find results and work out

formulae. Strengths are the way in which they develop very positive attitudes to their work and the enjoyment they get. Pupils use information and communication technology skills in other curriculum areas and this supports and improves their learning.

77. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. The teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' previous learning and they build on this effectively. The clarity of explanations, the firm but pleasant way that pupils are managed and constant use of praise and encouragement quickly establish a good climate for learning. Pupils become receptive, understand what they are required to do and are keen to have a go. Most pupils are well challenged and they make good progress and achieve well. In one lesson, the activities planned for a class were too easy and pupils became restless and did not make sufficient progress in their learning.
78. The co-ordinator is new and his leadership and management role is developing well. The termly plans serve as lesson plans and make clear links to each class's work in other subjects. Assessment procedures are sound. The computer suite is used well to develop skills in the subject and support learning in other areas. However, the classroom computers were not used during the inspection as the computers were new and did not have the relevant software. The development of the subject was a key issue in the previous inspection. The school has made good improvements and now the provision, teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are good, and standards across the school are in line with expected levels.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Across the school, information and communication technology skills are used well in several curriculum areas. In literacy, pupils word process their stories, poems and write for the school newspaper and illustrate them with pictures. They use computers for data handling and apply their mathematical skills as they devise a spreadsheet to show the total of points scored by each country in the World Cup Rugby tournament. In science, they write about body parts and draw graphs of their pulse rate. They use art programs to design wallpapers, make Christmas cards and draw pictures in the style of famous artists. Year 6 pupils had drawn a time line of their family tree in their history topic.

HUMANITIES

80. Provision for **history** and **geography** was not a focus for this inspection. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6 in either subject. An examination of pupils' work in Year 7 shows that there is good curriculum coverage, and pupils develop an increasing awareness of the skills required in both subjects. Standards are below national expectations for pupils of this age and this reflects the prior attainment of the pupils currently in Year 7. Displays around the school relating to both subjects, for example, on the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians and the effects of climate on countries, indicate that pupils are learning to organise information and analyse the changes that occur through the impact of both people and nature. In Year 7 books, there are some good examples of literacy and ICT being used to support learning in both history and geography.
81. Two history lessons were observed, one in Year 5 and one in Year 7. The teaching was good in one and very good in the other. In both lessons, pupils showed real interest in the subject and the pace of learning reflected the teaching. In the Year 7 lesson, elements of citizenship were skilfully interwoven into historical discussion providing pupils with an awareness of how society has developed over the centuries. In the one geography lesson seen in Year 4, the teaching was good.
82. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory in both subjects. The school is making use of national guidance in its curriculum planning. Currently, teaching is not regularly monitored and assessment is based mainly on sampling of work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are developing an understanding of the practices of a number of different faiths and the school interprets the Local Agreed Syllabus effectively.
- There is some good and very good teaching but teaching is satisfactory overall because higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough and literacy is not promoted as much as it could be.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

83. Four religious education lessons were seen during the period of the inspection. These, along with the scrutiny of a limited amount of written work, indicate that pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach standards in line with the expectations and demands of the Local Agreed Syllabus.
84. Pupils in Year 2 displayed a satisfactory understanding of Hinduism as they listened to stories about Lord Krishna, and recorded them in pictures and brief written passages. Pupils in Year 3 displayed positive attitudes to their work as they extended their knowledge of the Jewish religion, considered the importance of the Torah in the Jewish faith, before moving on to make a model Torah. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils worked in multi-faith groups on a project on special books in different religions. Pupils shared their knowledge and understanding of their own faiths and valued each other's values and religious beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 also extended their knowledge of the importance of the Bible within Christianity during a good lesson led by the local vicar. Pupils in Year 7 extended their knowledge of other faiths, as they considered the importance of Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism within religious communities.
85. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching seen during the inspection. Lessons are well planned, organised and managed. Teachers' good questioning skills extend pupils' knowledge and understanding as well as developing their oral skills. Much of pupils' work in lessons is of an oral nature, with pupils responding to issues by drawing pictures and adding brief notes. All pupils are engaged in the same activity immaterial of their prior attainment or knowledge of the English language. Opportunities are lost to develop literacy across the curriculum and to challenge higher-attaining pupils.
86. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the Local Agreed Syllabus is interpreted effectively. Pupils study an appropriate range of topics and come to appreciate the significance of the festivals and practices of various faiths, from their own experiences and through parents' visits to school. Assemblies make a positive contribution to the development of understanding, with some of the issues introduced in assemblies being extended in religious education lessons. Some good displays of religious books and posters and religious artefacts from different faiths make a positive contribution to the school ethos, and the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons in **art and design** and **design and technology** and to look at examples of pupils' work. Some good work has been produced in art in one or two classes, but pupils' achievement is restricted by most teachers' lack of subject knowledge. As a result, pupils' skills are not developed systematically as they move through the school. Appropriate use is made of the work of other artists as a stimulus for practical activity. In design and technology, some of the weaknesses found when the subject was

reviewed in 2001 are still evident. In a design and technology lesson in Year 5, pupils were given an open-ended task to come up with their 'own bread' design; because the teacher did not establish any expectations for the way they designed and provided no context for the activity, pupils worked at the level expected of pupils in Year 2. In their evaluation of commercially packaged soups, pupils in Year 7 have worked closer to National Curriculum expectations.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was seen.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and work together well.

Commentary

88. Although it was possible to observe only a limited number of music lessons during the inspection, these along with singing in assemblies indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age by the end of Years 2, 6 and 7. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants.
89. Pupils in Year 2 could sustain a beat when clapping out their names, before going on to learn a new song / sound story. Good cross-curricular links were observed in this lesson, with pupils extending their oral skills as they acted out the lyrics of the song. Pupils' enthusiasm for music was observed in Year 4 as they performed the poem 'Hip Happy Kid' as a rap. Pupils were given the chance to evaluate their own efforts with the intention of improving it through repetition. Pupils are given the chance to listen to and appraise music as well as compose and perform their own music. This was observed in a Year 5 lesson as pupils listened to a 'Loopy Weather' song before moving on to compose their own 'funky' songs. Pupils in Year 6 can create rhythmic patterns and accompany themselves using a range of untuned percussion instruments. As in all lessons observed, pupils worked well together when engaged in group activities. They listen to and value each other's ideas and opinions and share musical instruments in a sensible manner. Pupils can record their music on paper using graphic and pictorial notation, with a number of pupils having some knowledge of formal musical notation. Pupils sing well in lessons and assemblies with appropriate emphasis on breathing technique and the interpretation of lyrics.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching during the inspection. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced, and teachers give pupils the chance to respond to different elements of the music curriculum, listening and appraising and composing and performing. Pupils' satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the subject is helped by their positive attitudes and their good working relationships with their teachers.
91. The school has a well-attended choir that sings both in school and at a local annual music festival. Pupils who wish to extend their musical skills and talents are given access to the local music service where they learn wind and stringed instruments. Pupils are also given the chance to study Indian musical instruments.
92. Leadership and management in the subject are good. There is appropriate documentation in place to support teachers in the delivery of the subject, and a commercial scheme of work is interpreted in an effective manner. The subject co-ordinator has provided internal professional development for non-specialist teachers in the subject as well as taking other teachers' classes. The school has good assessment procedures, with all teachers tape recording pupils'

practical activities each term. These tapes are submitted to the subject co-ordinator to help in the monitoring of the subject. With the opportunity for pupils to work together in groups and to listen to a range of classical and contemporary music, as well as singing songs from other cultures and traditions, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection.

93. Provision for **physical education** was not a focus for this inspection. One lesson was observed, where the teaching was very good with some excellent features. The pace of the lesson was brisk, pupils were constantly challenged to improve their performance and they responded well. No time was wasted, and pupils handled the apparatus safely and confidently. There was mutual respect between the teacher and the pupils. As a result, standards in this particular lesson were above those expected for pupils of this age and their achievement was very good. An examination of the subject manager's file indicates that there is good coverage of the subject. There is increased provision for extra-curricular sport since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in personal, social and health education or citizenship.
95. Personal, social, health education and citizenship are actively promoted, both within discrete PSHE lessons and within and across other subjects. The impact of timetabled lessons, enrichment activities, and the school's involvement with the local community ensure that pupils make good progress in their personal development, learn about health, and know how to function as positive members of society.
96. Through the school council, a number of pupils learn to exercise real responsibility as key members of a community and to represent the views of others. They take this very seriously and those who were canvassing for support produced convincing posters explaining why their classmates should elect them. This gave pupils a very good opportunity to learn about the democratic process.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).