

INSPECTION REPORT

HARLESDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harlesden, London

LEA area: London Borough of Brent

Unique reference number: 101499

Headteacher: Ms Kekshan Salaria

Lead inspector: John William Paull

Dates of inspection: 17–20 May 2004

Inspection number: 256339

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	225
School address:	Acton Lane, Harlesden, London,
Postcode:	NW10 8UT
Telephone number:	020 8965 7445
Fax number:	020 8963 1828
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Narinder Nathan
Date of previous inspection:	10 July 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- With 225 on roll, the size of the school is similar to most other primary schools.
- The school received a National Achievement Award in 2003.
- The school is part of *Healthy Schools*.
- Pupils are drawn from mixed private, local authority and social housing, including local flats.
- About 56 per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well above average.
- Nearly half the pupils come from backgrounds in which English is an additional language at home, which is a very high proportion, and 44 of these pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English.
- The main languages are Arabic, Somali and Portuguese, although nearly 30 other different languages are believed to be spoken by pupils at the school.
- A further 15 per cent are from various minority ethnic groups for whom English is the main language.
- The largest group is black and pupils from African and Caribbean backgrounds are in roughly similar numbers. Other significant groups are pupils from families that originated in the Asian sub-continent and white pupils. Over half of these white pupils are not British.
- Fifty-eight pupils are from families with refugee status or who are seeking asylum.
- Nearly a quarter of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. The majority of these pupils experience difficulties that are likely to affect the rate at which they learn, including needs related to speech and language. Another significant group has social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- About 1 per cent of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, which is below average.
- A relatively high proportion of pupils leave the school at times other than the end of the year, and are replaced by others who join it.
- The attainment on entry of many pupils is very low; and socio-economic circumstances in the area around the school are well below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design PSHE and Citizenship Design and technology Music Special educational needs
32768	Margaret Jane Manfield	Lay inspector	
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Physical education Religious education
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Harlesden Primary is a well-run school and is improving rapidly. Leadership and management are good. Teaching and learning have been the main focus since its inspection of 2002, when an inspection led by an HMI gave it a satisfactory report. Since then, most aspects have improved from satisfactory to good. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to their work have been maintained and the rates at which they make progress are now good. Taking these findings together, the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- While pupils' progress and achievements are beginning to improve well, their attainment remains below average overall.
- A few weaknesses are apparent in the organisation, planning and resourcing of the curriculum, mainly in information and communication technology, and religious education.
- The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy head, has very high aspirations and very clear ideas about how to achieve them.
- Care and guidance of pupils and relationships with parents are strong aspects of what is provided.

Improvement at the time of the last inspection was satisfactory. In the two years since then, it has been good. In addition to further raising the quality of teaching and learning, successful starts have been made on nearly all other issues that were previously raised. Several subjects are managed better. This change has resulted in improvements in, for example, information and communication technology. Also, assessment and monitoring of performance are used more effectively to establish how to support pupils with special educational needs and those with little English. However, the outcomes are sometimes hampered by slow or intermittent responses from agencies that are beyond the school's control. As only two years have passed, further time for improvement is understandably still required. For example, the school is less successful in providing support for older pupils who arrive directly from overseas than for younger ones, who are supported well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	D	A
mathematics	E	E	C	A
science	E	E	E	C

*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' achievements are good when compared with their starting points. Many pupils with little or no English enter the school, several directly from overseas, and the proportion with identified special educational needs is also high. In Year 6, in work that was seen during the inspection, overall standards across the curriculum, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, are below average. The results of National Curriculum tests reflect this finding. In the inspection, attainment in science and mathematics were well below average and not as good as in English. Although the overall trend for results in Year 6 is below average since 1999, the latest results are much better than others of recent years. Realistic targets are set each year and these were exceeded in 2003. Results of tests in Year 2 are consistently well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the overall trend for Year 2 is now above the national trend. Work that was seen confirms that standards are beginning to rise. Again, bearing in mind that starting points

are often very low, these standards represent good achievement. In most other subjects, standards are similar. Children achieve very well in the Nursery and Reception classes, owing to very good teaching and provision. Nevertheless, many children do not reach expected goals at the end of the Reception Year, as two years is not enough time for them to make up all the ground.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of what is provided is generally good, although a few weaknesses were apparent in the curriculum. **The quality of teaching and learning is good**, including very good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, these young children settle very quickly and begin to make rapid progress through the steps expected for their ages. Good teaching was observed through the main school. However, owing in part at least to weaknesses in the past, expected levels of attainment are often not reached. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. However, shortcomings in the use of curricular plans, particularly in religious education, and insufficient resources, particularly in information and communication technology, contribute to slow the rates of learning in these important subjects. Care of pupils is strong.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's vision and direction for future progress are very strong and she is supported very well by the deputy head. As a result, effective measures have been put into place to ensure continued improvements, despite serious financial difficulties, which occurred before her appointment. The governing body now makes a good contribution to making decisions, having improved its role.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed satisfaction with and support for the school in all aspects of its work. They were very pleased with improvements in educational standards and the attitudes of their children towards learning. Questionnaires were also very supportive, with little disagreement recorded in response to any of the statements that were put and, unusually, none that was expressed strongly. This same high satisfaction was found during the inspection, in the case of parents who spoke to inspectors outside the school. Pupils also expressed strong support for their school, believing that teachers listen to their ideas and help them to progress.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Broaden pupils' general vocabulary and their understanding and uses of spoken English, as a means to raising standards both in literacy and in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that extra amounts of time allocated to reading and writing do not have a negative impact on standards in other subjects, but rather enhance them, and are enhanced by them.
- Use the good techniques of monitoring and assessment that were employed to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and the foundation stage to achieve similar effects in all other subjects, especially in:
 - 1) religious education, so that pupils' own knowledge and participation in different communities of faith are used more effectively as a resource to promote closer adherence to the locally agreed syllabus;
 - 2) information and communication technology, making the subject more readily usable in all classrooms, when finances permit, thereby raising standards in its use across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' achievements are good. Rates of progress are beginning to speed up throughout the school. However, standards of attainment at present are generally below average and sometimes well below.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are achieving very well from starting points that are often very low.
- Pupils' achievement through the school is good.
- Standards of attainment are generally below average, sometimes well below.
- Standards of attainment are beginning to rise, especially lower down the school.

Commentary

1. A very high proportion of children entering the school speak little or no English and the proportion of children who are accurately assessed as having special educational needs, including difficulties with speech and language, is above the national average. Several children have only recently arrived from overseas, often leaving difficult circumstances behind them. These experiences have produced gaps in their initial knowledge and attitudes to learning. All these factors combine in such a way that overall standards are often very low when children first enter the Nursery, or directly enter classes further up the school. A significant number of pupils who have benefited from improvements in the quality of provision leave the school before the end of Year 6. These factors are important barriers to raising statistical measures of attainment, such as average scores in National Curriculum tests.
2. In the Nursery and Reception classes, owing to very good and, on occasions, excellent provision, children's acquisition of skills and knowledge is fast. By the end of the Reception Year, achievements are therefore very good, so much so that a few pupils, including higher attainers, reach many of the goals that are expected for the age group. Nevertheless, most children do not reach such goals, so generally attainment remains well below what is normally the case at the start of Year 1.
3. After entry to the main school, good teaching ensures that good progress and achievement occur. Different groups of pupils are targeted for support in literacy and mathematics, especially those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Assessment and identification of pupils who require such early support are good. Individual Education Plans for pupils with learning difficulties are precise and describe measurable targets in straightforward language. Where such targets can be met from the school's own resources, provision is effective and ensures good progress. However, when support from outside agencies is required, good provision does not always result. For example, support for pupils who require speech therapy is often intermittent. Lack of staff within the local agencies is the main reason given. Difficulties of this kind are barriers to faster overall progress.
4. In most years, the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 are well below the relevant national averages. In reading, in 2003, they were in the bottom five per cent nationally, although this result rose to simply below average when compared with results in similar schools. On this basis of comparison, results in writing were above average and, in mathematics, were in line with average. In 2002, the school experienced its best-ever year, with results that were just below the national figure in reading and in line in writing. Results that

year were in line with or better than those of similar schools in all three tested subjects. Writing was well above average and reading a little above. The school's relatively small year groups make annual statistical fluctuations likely. However, the school's overall trend in its Year 2 National Curriculum test results is above the national trend since 1999, with most improvement coming in recent years. In science, teachers' assessments indicate that attainment in 2003 was below average. Bearing in mind that pupils' starting points are often very low, achievement is often good.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.5 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.4 (15.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Work seen during the inspection reflects broadly what is indicated in the national tests. Attainment in Years 1 and 2 varies a little between the classes and subjects, but is generally of a higher standard than that achieved a few years ago. The high quality provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is set to improve the situation further, as progress begins to build from a higher starting point. In each of Years 1 and 2, a considerable focus on literacy results in continued improved performance in reading and writing. This extra support often focuses on the requirements of pupils with English as an additional language or those with special educational needs and it addresses their targets effectively. However, pupils' general vocabulary is often restricted. As a result, although they listen well and provide a sympathetic audience to others, speaking and listening taken together are well below average. Pupils have simply not had enough time to acquire a wide range of words and flexibility of usage by the end of Year 2, which then has an adverse effect on how they write.
6. In mathematics and science, slightly different, but still positive pictures emerge. In these subjects, attainment is not so directly dependent on pupils' English. As a result, what was seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that several higher-attaining pupils are likely to reach levels above those normally expected for their age. Most pupils, including several at early stages of acquiring English, are on course to reach normally expected levels. Nearly all pupils reach the expected level in naming and recognising shapes and using measures. Overall standards in Year 2 are below average, rather than well below, and a little higher than in English. In science, the picture has similarities to that in mathematics. Standards are rising and are currently below average towards the end of Year 2.
7. The overall quality of teaching and learning is also good from Year 3 to Year 6. However, evidence from past reviews of the school's performance and its previous inspection indicates that quality has not always been this high, which has affected past achievement. Nevertheless, statutory targets are agreed with the local authority each year and, in 2003, these were exceeded. However, the school's overall trend in results in Year 6 is currently below the national trend, owing largely to poor results in 2002. Standards of attainment and pupils' achievements in Years 3, 4 and 5 show clear signs of improvement. However, in Year 6, while teaching is now good, especially so in mathematics, the legacy of poor teaching that pupils experienced a few years ago is still evident. This class also has a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the mobility of pupils has also been relatively high, including several who arrived directly from overseas. Results in 2003 were the school's best since 2000. In 2003, only in science were results well below the national average. In mathematics, they were average and, in English, they were a little below.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (25.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (23.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.8 (25.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

8. In work that was observed during the inspection, overall standards in English are below average. Pupils listen well, concentrating on what speakers say, and entering discussions in ways that show respect towards the needs of other listeners. However, by Year 6, speaking is often well below what is normally expected. Many pupils often give the impression that they do not have the vocabulary to express precisely what they mean. This deficiency is reflected in their writing, although it is lessened by good teaching, which focuses on pupils' use of good descriptions. Despite this good teaching and other support, spelling is often weak, especially of words where phonic rules do not apply. Reading, however, is about average, which pushes the overall standard of English upward. At present, standards in mathematics and science are well below average. The main reason for lower attainment in these two subjects is that past poor teaching has caused gaps in learning. As understanding of them is strongly dependent on acquiring skills sequentially, these gaps depress attainment. Nevertheless, the rate of progress is picking up, leading to good achievements currently in the case of many pupils.
9. In other subjects, the picture is varied. In geography and history, knowledge is close to expected levels, although not always well recorded. In religious education, attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is below expected levels, owing to weaknesses in uses of planning and subject knowledge that are negatively affecting the quality of teaching and learning. In more practical subjects, achievements are better and often high in art and design, and singing. Although overall attainment is below average in information and communication technology, skills and knowledge of programs are developed well in the computer suite. Lack of good resources in classrooms prevents these skills from being applied sufficiently in other subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, including moral, social and cultural development, are good and support their learning strongly. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is below average, while punctuality is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall.
- Many strong procedures are in place to promote good attendance.
- Attendance is below average.

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy their school and are keen to take a full part in all that it offers. They behave well in their classrooms and around the school. Nearly all of them have a positive attitude to learning. These findings reflect the positive views of parents. They also support the headteacher's and governors' view that this aspect is one of continuing improvement since the last inspection.

11. The headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct and they work hard and successfully to achieve them. Pupils are polite and considerate towards each other and adults. The school's behaviour policy is very clear and is known and understood by pupils. Playground rules and a code of conduct are prominently displayed as reminders. Pupils are involved in setting their own rules, which are displayed prominently. In Nursery and Reception these take the form of simple positive guidance such as "be kind" and "share toys". This positive approach is developed throughout the school. It progresses well, so that by Year 6, pupils agree to "...take responsibility for my own actions". In this way, the rules reflect the growing maturity and personal development of pupils as they grow up. Pupils value their teachers' support. The whole school participates in the *Pink Panther* ticket system, where the achievements of individuals from each year group are celebrated in a weekly assembly. Younger pupils receive special stickers to reward good behaviour and/or work.
12. In the Nursery and Reception classes, most children are on course to achieve the relevant goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. They share resources and toys well for their age, following their rules, and usually take turns sensibly when working and playing together. They achieve these goals because of consistently very good, often excellent, teaching. Trusting and warm relationships between all adults and children further support the climate for learning and help children to respond with a cheerful, sensible attitude.
13. Pupils listen to their teachers and work hard in groups or individually. This significant contribution to the climate for learning allows teachers and pupils to focus on learning. On rare occasions when pupils become restless or inattentive, teachers remind them of the class rules and, nearly always, pupils respond quickly, regaining focus without distracting others. Pupils with identified social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties are well-known to teaching assistants and teachers alike. They are appropriately encouraged, reminded about routines and supported. As a result, their potential difficulties are prevented from escalating into unacceptable behaviour.
14. The school has benefited from improvements to the playground. Several different areas are laid out for various types of play and preference. Pupils use all these areas with consideration for others, suggesting that they are developed well both morally and socially. Pupils also mix well, without self-consciousness about gender or ethnicity. Pupils are confident that, if an unacceptable incident occurs during play, they can tell a teacher and it will be dealt with effectively. In the case of bullying, several pupils stated that it is not tolerated by pupils themselves. As a result, they stated a determination to report any incident on behalf of a bullied pupil. The school's system of sending *Time Out* notices home ensures that parents are also informed of any incidents of bad behaviour.
15. The School Council provides the opportunity for responsibility and enterprise. Each class has a £10 budget to spend as it wishes, which allows all pupils to participate in decisions. Other opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility are less formal. Within each year group pupils act as register monitors and perform tasks such as sharpening pencils. A "buddy" system is used to help mid-year joiners settle into school. This system involves older pupils in helping new arrivals to become familiar with routines.
16. Statutory requirements for a daily act of worship are met and spiritual links are evident across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils' moral, social and cultural development are generally good. A telling example was observed in Year 6. Pupils worked on art and design in an Australian Aboriginal style. They worked carefully and demonstrated both absorption in and sympathy with the symbolic representations in the photocopies of originals that their teacher supplied. On another occasion, a Muslim pupil responded to an inspector in a very inclusive manner. Pupils explained the Ancient Egyptian practice of entombing their pharaohs with treasures to take to the afterlife. When an inspector commented that, as a Christian, he would only be able to take himself, a Muslim pupil replied, "That's the same for us, we can only take ourselves as well!" The school encourages such inclusive attitudes amongst its pupils, as well

as a curiosity about and respect for the environment. The different languages and cultures of pupils at the school are celebrated as a good feature. Pupils are not simply tolerant of each other's beliefs and customs, but very interested in them. Pupils' social and moral development is well reflected in the careful way that they use the building and the resources that are provided.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	9.0
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.1
National data:	0.4

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

17. Attendance is below average. However, it is improving and the school has several strong procedures to raise it further. Measures are in place to monitor attendance and punctuality. The school works effectively with the local education welfare officer when absence or lateness are unexplained. Unauthorised absence is low.

Exclusions

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	3	0	0
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	57	2	0
Black or Black British – African	45	0	0
Black or Black British – any other background	8	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0

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

18. The table includes pupils of compulsory school age. At the time of the last inspection, the number of exclusions had fallen and this reduction has been sustained.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education that is provided is good. Teaching and learning are good, although, overall, planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. Care, advice and guidance of pupils and links with parents and the community are good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is good, including very good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, pupils learn and acquire skills well as they move through the school. Use of assessment to inform planning of teaching and of what is taught is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved since the inspection of 2002.
- Throughout the school, teachers insist on and achieve high standards of behaviour in lessons, which supports pupils' learning strongly.
- Teachers' knowledge of what to teach is nearly always good.
- Opportunities to broaden and develop pupils' understanding and uses of vocabulary and of standard forms of spoken English are often missed.
- Teachers take every opportunity to encourage and support pupils, which is an excellent feature in the Nursery and Reception classes, with the result that pupils have good attitudes to learning and apply themselves well.
- Homework is often used well to support learning.
- Teaching and learning in religious education are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers use the results of tests and assessments very well to adapt their teaching of literacy and numeracy, including assessments that establish special educational needs, whereas these features are used inconsistently and insufficiently in other subjects.

Commentary

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It was satisfactory during the inspection of 2002, and so improvement in this aspect has been good. This quality reflects the opinions of parents both in responses to questionnaires and in the pre-inspection meeting. During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed in the Nursery and Reception classes was nearly always very good and examples of excellent practice were seen. This improvement is remarkable, as it was simply satisfactory in 2002. In the main school, teaching of singing was consistently very strong, including excellent teaching in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. In Literacy Hours, the teaching of English was consistently good, as it was in shared reading, writing and extra literacy sessions for pupils of lower prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and, where relevant, with English as an additional language were also served well in these sessions. Teaching is also good in mathematics. Improvements have been brought about owing to very good leadership of the headteacher and deputy head, supported by good co-ordination. Key staff have monitored, supported and guided teachers. Key appointments to the staff have also been made. For example, the recently appointed co-ordinator of provision in the Nursery and Reception age groups has had a very strong impact. These improvements are leading to good acquisition of skills and knowledge amongst pupils. However, pupils often enter the school with very low levels of attainment so that although teaching now results in good rates of learning and often good achievement compared with starting points, attainment usually remains low.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
4 (9 %)	8 (17 %)	23 (50 %)	9 (20%)	2 (4%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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.

20. With respect to personal development, attitudes and behaviour, teachers know and understand their pupils' needs very well. As a result, they manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and, in all age groups, attitudes to learning and the pace at which pupils work are good. Personal, social and emotional development is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes. These young children listen well and a good climate for learning results. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum is generally good through the main school, especially in Literacy and Numeracy Hours. Teaching in these lessons closely follows the guidance of the relevant national strategies and is raising standards effectively. The assessment of pupils' special educational needs makes a strong contribution to this aspect. Pupils who require early support in English are identified and receive extra instruction of good quality from trained assistants. In older age groups, further additional support is provided whenever the need is identified. In mathematics, good support, including in lessons that are known as *Springboard*, is provided. Pupils with English as an additional language are also included fully in these groups, in either or both subjects, when their knowledge of English suggests that it is needed. In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers and nursery nurses alike display very strong understanding of the areas of learning. The most telling aspect is their constant use of questioning and talk to arouse curiosity and their excellent modelling of speech and language. This very good practice addresses children's learning needs exactly, as many are from backgrounds where English is an additional language, while others also have a very restricted vocabulary. The presence of this very relevant provision is pertinent, as it is available as a model of practice to spread into all age groups. It strongly matches the particular needs of pupils throughout the main school also, where opportunities to extend pupils' uses of spoken English are sometimes missed. On occasions, pupils spoke very quietly or hesitantly and gave the impression that they struggled to find the right words. Although teachers were quick to encourage and support on these occasions, they missed the opportunity to model what the pupils might have said, or to ask the whole class to join in or to use better phraseology.
21. The use of encouragement to reassure pupils and to help them to remain on task is another strong feature in all classes through the school. Its effectiveness is very apparent in the Nursery and Reception classes, in which many cases were observed where children's faces lit up at the approval of teachers and nursery nurses alike and returned to their efforts with reinforced concentration. Awards and encouraging remarks in exercise books and similar strategies are used effectively in all classes.
22. Use of homework is often good. Pupils are asked to complete work, find things out or undertake simple rote learning tasks that support what they learn in class. Often these tasks are associated with English or mathematics. Nevertheless, teachers are very aware that lack of English in some pupils' homes might be a restriction on the amount of help that parents are able to give, so tasks are set sensitively and realistically. In the main, pupils respond well and those asked thought that what was set was fair and "...about what I can do".
23. In science, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, rather than good. The main reason is that use of worksheets is limiting pupils' opportunities to practise written English to record their findings. While this strategy has the advantage of saving time for those pupils who find standard forms of English difficult to produce, it also prevents them from learning how to employ scientific vocabulary in written contexts that they generate themselves.
24. In other subjects across the curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and learning reflected what was seen in English and mathematics, although variations were found. For example, religious education is a weaker subject, in which two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. In these lessons, teachers did not use their own planning well enough. As a result, references to world religions and pupils' knowledge and membership of faith communities were not sufficiently recognised as a basis for discussion and learning, as required in the locally agreed syllabus. The specifically religious content of themes that are taught is thus insufficient and not well enough related to pupils' experiences. Teaching of information and communication

technology is good in the computer suite, including a very good lesson taught by the subject co-ordinator. As a result, pupils are acquiring good quality experiences of a range of relevant programs and are using skills at about the expected levels for their age groups. However, lack of equipment in classrooms is a barrier to learning, as it is preventing adequate practice at other times and in other contexts. The use of specialists and links with other schools, such as that with a local secondary school, is helping to provide regular teaching from experts in particular subjects. For example, a dance teacher taught very well when she visited Year 5. A very strong feature of this lesson was that the class teacher began it, using techniques that she had acquired by observing the specialist previously. As a result, this high quality is likely to be sustained in the school in the future.

25. Improvement since the last inspection is evident in the teaching and learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Overall provision is satisfactory. Support provided by the assistant for Years 1, 2 and 3 is good. Throughout the school, bilingual pupils benefit from strategies used by mainstream teachers, such as questioning that is suitably adapted and directed to them, which helps them to join in with learning through discussions effectively. However, support in Years 4, 5 and 6, while satisfactory, is less effective, owing partly to the assistant's lack of experience in working with pupils with little or no English, which is recognised and plans to rectify the situation with in-service training are afoot. It is also owing partly to limited opportunities for pupils to use their home language to develop ideas that might later be transferable into English. Because of these slightly weaker elements, progress for these pupils is slow at first, although it clearly speeds up when they acquire a sufficient working knowledge of English usage.
26. Procedures and uses of assessment, systems for tracking pupils' progress, and the monitoring of pupils' performances are good and used effectively in English and mathematics. Overall and individual pupils' targets are set for each class based on information that these systems provide. All of this good practice helps teachers to plan pupils' work and to know whether their progress is on track to meet the predicted outcomes. When further assessments indicate a problem or a slow-down in a pupil's or class's performance, reasons are sought and further adaptations are made. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, performance is regularly assessed against Individual Education Plans, and adjustments to pupils' targets are made as they attain them. However, this strength is not as clearly evident in other subjects, including science. Although several co-ordinators check planning and gather portfolios of work, this information is not as secure or as informative as it is in the main core subjects. This difference in approach is a contributory factor to the more varied quality of provision in the other subjects.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall, with good opportunities to enrich what is taught through uses of the community and links with other schools. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources support what is provided adequately.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has responded well to weaknesses that were identified in the last inspection report.
- The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very well planned.
- Good uses of the community enrich what is taught.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is usually good.
- A few areas of weakness are apparent in provision for religious education and information and communication technology.
- Significant gaps are apparent in planning of pupils' acquisition of general vocabulary and uses of writing outside English lessons.

Commentary

27. The school's positive response to the issues raised in the last inspection report has led to a broader, richer curriculum. Indeed, opportunities for enrichment are now a strength of what is provided. This improvement has developed partly from the school's seeking out external links, extending the use of facilities in the local community such as theatres, workshops and businesses. In many instances, this has led to a strengthening of provision for all the pupils in the school. Staff at a local branch of *Barclays Bank* have come into the school, for example, to promote interest in reading, as well as to provide help with resources. Specialist teaching for dance, drama and music has similarly provided school-wide benefits to the quality of what is taught, including regular visits from a secondary school dance teacher. Such links also assist in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.
28. In the Nursery and Reception classes, planning of what to teach is thorough and easy to use. All areas of learning are built into all topics and themes that are planned and introduced to the children. Such skilful and knowledgeable planning of the curriculum makes a strong contribution to learning. A particularly strong feature is the way the outside area is similarly set up to provide rich experiences in all aspects of children's work and development. Indoor and outdoor spaces and bays are attractive, with colourful displays that invite children to explore and to use the resources that are made available to them. Labels and key words are apparent everywhere, encouraging children to read them.
29. In all classes through the school, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and planned effectively. Good co-ordination and training have ensured that teachers understand all elements of these strategies well. However, the amount of time spent on English lessons, including guided reading, five full Literacy Hours each week and additional work on writing, is causing shortages of time for other subjects, which affects the balance of the taught curriculum adversely. To some extent, the same is true of mathematics, in which many planned numeracy sessions run for a full hour, rather than forty-five minutes. While this emphasis has had some impact on standards, it has reduced the time that is available to focus on uses of literacy across the curriculum. For example, groups of pupils are often withdrawn from other subjects, even mathematics and science, for extra support and coaching in literacy. Although care is taken to ensure that the same subject is not constantly affected; and while this practice may raise the extent to which pupils with restricted English are able to access the curriculum, it is also likely to cause gaps in learning in those lessons from which they are withdrawn. This factor is particularly significant as so many pupils are recent arrivals from overseas and might therefore lack cultural facts that are required to access the National Curriculum. The school is aware of such shortcomings and is on the point of reviewing this practice to seek a way of organising it more effectively. As a direct result, examples of good reflective writing in religious education lessons or the development of pupils' own factual writing in history and geography, and scientific accounts of observations or experiments are infrequent, as worksheets become overused as a substitute to ensure that work is recorded. This lack of opportunity may hinder the raising of standards in the long-term. Another reason is that this concentration on literacy means that speaking and creativity are less focused as priorities. This is a pity, as many pupils, not only those with English as an additional language, but also many who speak English as their mother-tongue, use restricted, often colloquial, patterns of speech and a limited vocabulary.
30. A better element of the curriculum is a strong commitment to include all pupils in what is provided. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, for example, is good. All pupils, irrespective of gender or ethnicity, are encouraged and enabled to take part in all activities. A telling example has been the response to the planned long-term closure of local swimming pools for refurbishment. Already, the headteacher is aware that this situation might affect pupils' entitlement to learn. She is planning to alter the school's arrangements for swimming lessons to make sure that pupils who would otherwise miss the opportunity will not do so.

31. A good programme of work has been developed to promote pupils' personal, social and health education. A School Council has been formed, which provides an important forum for pupils to develop an understanding of democracy, providing them with an elected voice for their views to be made known. Group activity known as *Circle Time* allows opportunities for them to raise their personal concerns in a secure setting within the classroom. A programme that provides sex education, information about the dangers of misusing drugs and alcohol, and what it means to relate effectively to other people is included in this provision.
32. Staffing is adequate to teach the full basic curriculum, including the National Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the number and quality of learning support staff. This emphasis helps to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The need for further extending the role of subject co-ordinators in planning and monitoring of, and innovation within, the curriculum has already been identified in the school's improvement plan. Strategies to this effect are currently being implemented. For example, a responsibility for creativity in the curriculum has been included in the deputy headteacher's role. She is currently researching aspects of its development as part of her studies for the *National Professional Qualification for Headteachers*.
33. The accommodation and learning resources, including the stock of books, contribute satisfactorily to pupils' achievements. However, while work stations in the computer suite are adequate, a lack of good quality computers in the classrooms is a barrier to progress, as pupils cannot practise the skills that they acquire sufficiently. As a result, their basic typing and the use of the mouse are often slow and hesitant. The school's site is very well maintained by its site manager, who is also an excellent role model for pupils, consistently displaying qualities of cheerfulness, co-operation and efficiency.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils, including those in the Nursery and Reception classes. Advice to and guidance of pupils are also good and pupils' opinions and concerns are sought and taken into account satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a strongly supportive and caring atmosphere.
- Teachers are interested in their pupils' welfare and seek to advise and do their best for them.
- Pupils' relationships with teachers and other staff are good.

Commentary

34. The caring climate of the school is a major strength. Daily routines are planned with pupils' safety and interests in mind. Pupils are supported well and well supervised. All staff are aware of local procedures for child protection and of individual pupils' particular medical or special needs. Designated members of staff are trained and always on hand should the need for first-aid arise. The school works effectively with parents and local agencies to ensure pupils' welfare. Similar basic procedures apply for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
35. Even though some internal areas of the school's building require decoration or refurbishment, it is safe, attractive and welcoming. The site manager is well aware of potential hazards posed by its location on a bend on a busy London thoroughfare. Lollipop patrols at the start and end of each school day help to ensure pupils' safety, but further measures have been identified to improve the exit from the car park.
36. Pupils' dietary needs are known and good procedures ensure that they are met. The school participates in the Healthy Schools initiative, which promotes the eating of good food, including fruit, and physical activity. A local authority dietician has worked effectively with the school and its pupils to improve the quality of meals provided at lunchtimes.

37. During the inspection, those pupils who were asked felt that their teachers and other school staff were friendly towards them and approachable. Good relations with lunchtime assistants are evident from the respectful manner of staff towards pupils, which is nearly always returned. In the Nursery and Reception age groups, midday staff continue into the afternoon session for half an hour. This very good practice ensures a good handover to teachers, including time to pass on information about any incidents that might have occurred. It also provides a smooth transition back to work for the children. This continuity helps even the youngest to feel happy and secure. Pupils of all ages are very proud of their play areas, which they helped to design – an example of how they are consulted in the running of the school.
38. Throughout the school there are effective systems to monitor and track pupils' academic and personal achievements. Pupils often know their literacy and numeracy targets well, although they are not yet involved in the process of actually setting them. A weaker aspect is that targets in Individual Education Plans are not consistently shared with pupils who have special educational needs. Nevertheless, the special needs co-ordinator is currently seeking procedures to introduce this practice. Systems to monitor attendance and to promote it are very good and are carried out conscientiously, including a computerised system to record registration information.
39. Children first entering the Nursery are supported by a very good induction programme. Prior to beginning, home visits are available to help children and parents get to know school staff and what is required. These initial visits also provide an opportunity for parents to share information that might help their children to settle quickly. More than half the pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 move on to *Capital City Academy*, a local secondary school. Smooth transition to this school is helped by visits from the headteacher and Year 7 staff to meet pupils and share information. Links with other secondary schools are not as thorough. However, future plans for all pupils in Year 6, and their parents, to have a "moving on" meeting are expected to ensure that leavers are fully informed about their options.
40. The School Council is effective in allowing pupils to contribute their views and to become self-assured citizens. Members from each year group record suggestions and ideas raised in their class for discussion at the council. Feedback to classes is ensured through pupils' own notes and formal minutes of the meetings circulated by the headteacher. The School Council played a prominent part in the changes to the playground and to improvements in school meals. These improvements have contributed strongly to the opinion of most pupils that they are listened to and valued by adults in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents and the community around the school. It works satisfactorily with other local schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about Harlesden Primary School and believe that they have a strong and effective partnership with their children's teachers.
- Links with the community and local businesses support learning well.
- Regular visits off the premises contribute much to pupils' learning.

Commentary

41. At the meeting prior to the inspection and in responses to questionnaires, nearly all parents expressed positive opinions about what is provided. They felt that their children enjoy going to school and make good progress. They felt that the school is well led and managed and that its improvement since the last inspection is good. They believe that their children are

encouraged to become increasingly mature and independent as they move through the school. They feel that homework is a good feature. Parents are supportive in a number of practical ways, including volunteering to help in class and with school outings and events.

42. The school provides good information about the curriculum, activities and events, through both written newsletters and meetings. All staff are very aware of the ethnic diversity of pupils and their families and, where possible, provide documents translated into a range of languages. The annual report on pupils' progress includes information about each subject, and a general comment on personal and social development. Almost all parents are pleased with the scope of information that they receive. Each term, formal consultation evenings for parents, with their child's teacher, provide an opportunity to discuss their child's progress and personal development. For parents of children with special educational needs, this meeting includes a review of their child's Individual Education Plan and targets.
43. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of homework. Guidance on how to help children at home is also good. In addition to information about the curriculum, the school runs family learning classes and adult classes in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. These classes provide practical support to parents, which is highly valued, and an opportunity for pupils to see adults as learners like themselves. As a result, pupils are provided with good role models on which to base their own attitudes to learning.
44. In questionnaires and at the meeting, a significant majority of parents were very complimentary about the approachability of the headteacher and staff. They felt that their suggestions are taken into account and that concerns are investigated and taken seriously. Inspectors found that senior staff and class teachers alike are open and friendly and that the school's procedure for dealing with complaints is clearly written and accessible. Daily arrangements for collecting pupils allow parents to raise queries or concerns with class teachers, as they arise.
45. At present, no Parent-Teacher Association exists, which is a lack that the headteacher is keen to rectify, as a means for parents to support the school more effectively by raising funds and to provide a closer forum for discussions about provision between parents and staff. Nevertheless, a scheme for ordering and providing pupils with snacks of organic fruit, which runs alongside learning-based activities during the school day, is supported well by parents. Other activities and events similarly encourage parents' involvement in school life.
46. Senior staff, teachers and teaching assistants know the locality well and forge effective links with local organisations and businesses. For example, resources such as football kits, cushions for the library and utensils for the new breakfast club have all been provided with help of this kind. Other benefits are regular helpers in school, for activities that include help with reading, work on school grounds, and an arrangement with a local supermarket to provide water bottles for pupils. A wide range of visits and visitors enhances children's learning. These include trips to the Royal Albert Hall, art galleries, museums and a residential school journey for older pupils.
47. The exchange of information with local secondary schools is satisfactory. Staff work well with parents and children to prepare them for transfer to secondary education. The school maintains useful links with other schools and colleges and provides places for work experience for pupils in Year 10 from Queen's Park and Copeland Schools, and for students in further education at Northwest College. Since the last inspection, support and advice from the local education authority has been sought and provided effectively. Owing to its own very good practice in the Nursery and Reception classes, the school is beginning to share its expertise in this age group with other schools. In Year 6, very good teaching of mathematics, which was also confirmed in an observation during the inspection, has resulted in the identification of a member of staff as a potential leading teacher of the subject by the local authority.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governing body has taken a prominent role in helping to move the school forward. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is a very determined leader, with a very strong vision. She is supported very well by the deputy head and other senior managers fulfil their roles effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- The leadership of key staff is good and effective teamwork is a strong feature.
- Management is effective.
- The governing body has improved its contribution to leadership since the last inspection.
- Staff evaluate the school's performance well and use their findings very effectively to plan improvements.
- The school promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity well.

Commentary

48. The headteacher provides high quality leadership. She has inspired and successfully implemented many improvements since her appointment three years ago. The work of the school reflects her clear vision and strong sense of purpose. She has united all staff to form a coherent, effective team. Her energetic presence and sensitivity to the needs of staff and pupils generate a happy, constructive climate for learning, which effectively binds the school into a working community. Planning for improvement is good. The headteacher's clear overall vision, supported strongly by the deputy head, is based on careful analysis of results and detailed information from improved systems for monitoring of teaching and learning that she has introduced.
49. The deputy head and the other key staff are involved well in the work of the school. This reflects the headteacher's determination to draw on others' expertise and to ensure that all parts of the school are involved in sharing ideas and contributing to decisions. All staff work well together and demonstrate a strong commitment to attaining higher standards for their pupils. Co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science manage their subjects well. This finding is reflected in improvements to overall standards achieved and pupils' good attitudes to learning. Systematic monitoring in English and mathematics is a strong feature, but the monitoring of other subjects is often less frequent. As a result, it is less useful than it should be in identifying points for improvement, especially in subjects such as science and religious education.
50. The co-ordination of provision for special educational needs is good. The headteacher supports this good work by managing the support staff well. Their expertise is growing steadily. The communication between the headteacher, co-ordinator of special needs, teaching assistants and class teachers is good. Such good relationships between staff contribute to pupils' good progress, providing them consistently with challenging tasks that are adapted to their needs. Class teachers have responsibility for organising the teaching assistants. While some do this very well, the practice overall is inconsistent. The headteacher monitors the outcomes systematically, to prepare reports for the governors and keep them well informed.
51. The governing body is now more fully involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school than at the time of the last inspection. It carries out its statutory duties effectively. Governors are well informed. A well established committee structure focuses on the significant aspects of the school's work. As a result, many governors have knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are strongly committed to improvement and well involved in the processes of planning future developments. They acknowledge that testing and regular monitoring of the effectiveness of their decisions require further development, so as to be certain that what they intended is what results from action taken. Nevertheless, the chair of

governors, especially, has a clear view of the headteacher's vision and shares it well. Drawing on a good range of expertise, governors support the school and its staff effectively, combining support with constructive comment. The school evaluates its own provision very well using information effectively to plan for improvements. Under the present headteacher, the school's renewed vision and shared sense of purpose are brought to life by means of effective management. Procedures for the professional development of staff are good and closely linked with carefully reasoned priorities. The results of the school's good management are seen, for example, in the high proportion of good quality teaching, a strong and effective policy for managing pupils' behaviour and the school's positive climate for learning.

52. It is further testimony to the headteacher's skilful management that improvements to overall provision have been made in the context of a very tight financial climate. This situation is a legacy of decisions that were made before her appointment. Financial records are now monitored securely. Expenditure is rigorously managed in relation to priorities. Nevertheless, a deficit budget was set last year, as reductions would have been damaging to the development of the school. A way forward has been agreed with the local authority.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	766,902	Balance from previous year	40,800
Total expenditure	779,165	Balance carried forward to the next	- 12,263
Expenditure per pupil	3,408		

53. Current financial statements suggest that the school is on course to remedy its financial situation within a timescale agreed with the local authority. However, this situation is not without effect, as constraint has left only very small funds to cover unexpected expenditure or emergencies that might arise. Furthermore, it restricts flexibility in, for example, increasing the hours of teaching assistants to meet fluctuating needs of pupils undergoing statutory assessments of special educational needs.
54. Despite its tight finances, the school is generally successful in ensuring that pupils are fully included and share equality of opportunity. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to share their own heritage, to feel proud of where they came from, and to celebrate diversity of ethnicity and culture. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are enabled to work successfully and to attain levels that reflect their identified needs, difficulties, or conversely, their ability. The main reason is that a conscientious staff are well led. Their morale is therefore high and they work hard to overcome any deficit caused by financial constraint.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Currently 52 children altogether attend full-time in the Nursery and Reception classes. They are skilfully eased into life at school during September, using very positive links with parents. Later arrivals into the Reception class are also well prepared for their start, with frequent visits beforehand. Most children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is very low, particularly in communication, language and literacy, partly because so many speak little or no English. Many of the children have little experience outside their home until they start school, which means that their personal, social and emotional development is also lower than is usually the case.

By the time they reach Year 1, children have made very good progress and achieved very well. Growth in confidence, maturity and speaking English is considerable. Since the last inspection, improvements in provision have been remarkable. Children with English as an additional language are effectively supported and make very good progress. Individual needs are identified early and children with special educational needs receive good care and support and make rapid progress.

What is taught is carefully based on *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a national document that outlines areas of learning to be taught in Nursery and Reception classes). Very good planning ensures that children are provided with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. The staff are fully aware of the principles that underpin high quality teaching for young children. A rigorous approach to monitoring children's progress is applied. Children are set clear learning targets for literacy and numeracy skills and teachers have a very good understanding of how young children acquire them. All staff work together as an effective team. The co-ordinator provides very high quality leadership.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to achieve nearly all of the relevant goals by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children achieve very well because of consistently very good and often excellent teaching.
- Trusting and warm relationships between all adults and children result in a very pleasant learning environment.
- Children are given good opportunities to use their initiative and develop their independence.

Commentary

55. Many children enter school with little experience of the world outside their home and immediate locality. Nevertheless, they settle down quickly because of a supportive climate for learning, in which each child is treated individually, known well by teachers and nursery nurses alike and helped to feel very special. Very positive relationships are to the fore and, as a result, children feel secure and happy. Clear boundaries about what is acceptable, set firmly, but kindly, by the adults, mean that children nearly always behave calmly and with considerable enjoyment. By the time they are in the Reception class, they almost unfailingly demonstrate respect for each other, share resources and take turns when working and playing together. In these ways, they become very good role models for the younger Nursery children. Children are attentive and eager to learn and, because the older children and adults are such good models of co-operation, almost all children find it easy to conform to the high

standards that are expected. Children know the daily routines well; they settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly at all times. Children of all different backgrounds mix harmoniously and show developing confidence in trying new activities.

56. Teaching is very good and the nursery nurses work particularly well alongside teachers, helping to establish high standards of behaviour and social skills. For example, during discussions, they prompt and whisper about putting up a hand first to contribute to talk and answer questions. Children's play and responses are supported and extended sensitively through directed questioning. They are given every opportunity to develop their initiative and manage tasks independently. Encouragement of these skills was noted frequently, when adults used a lot of praise to encourage children to remain concentrated on selected activities for good lengths of time and to tidy up when they finished. All adults make regular checks of the level of children's involvement in activities. Constant encouragement of every step of learning ensures that all children are working to capacity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good from very low starting points.
- Teachers and nursery nurses are very animated, skilful listeners, which encourages children's speech.
- The adults use talk to very good effect.
- Teaching is very good and often excellent.
- The school/home reading system is well established.

Commentary

57. Children achieve very well, bearing in mind that so many of them start from very low attainment when they first come into the Nursery class. All of them make good progress and very careful assessments indicate that as many as a quarter are likely to reach the goals for the age group by the time they leave the Reception class. Very good teaching of basic skills and a clear focus on the development of speaking and listening skills are the main reasons for this strong learning. By the end of the Reception Year, those children who do not reach the normally expected goals have nevertheless covered a considerable amount of ground, acquiring functional use of spoken English and the confidence to use it. The large proportion of children at an early stage of learning English are very well supported in Nursery and Reception classes alike. Instructions for activities are very practical. Demonstration and use of visual information enable all children, including those completely new to English, to understand what they have to do. Some good strategies, such as sharing favourite stories and talking about pictures, support children well in their early literacy development. In a very good session, many Nursery aged children demonstrated a good understanding of the story of *Titch*, which was very effectively supported with visual resources. Children benefit from this type of teaching, with its skilful use of learning resources.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Nursery and Reception age groups. All interactions with children are based on talk and developing their knowledge and understanding. All adults show that they value children's efforts at communicating. They offer children eye contact, smiles and rich facial expressions. As a result, children frequently bring their work and attempt to talk about their experiences. In turn, teachers and nursery nurses constantly offer new vocabulary across all aspects of experience and model phrases and sentences. However, teaching does not end with this consistent emphasis on spoken English. In the Nursery class, for example, skills to control pencils and to develop early writing skills are introduced. They draw and paint the shapes of letters and numbers with increasing control.

Handling books, enjoying stories and the introduction of early reading skills are also taught very effectively. Very good progress is made when adults work in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. The success of this approach was noted in a small group session in which Reception aged children were skilfully supported in reading. These children all knew the direction of text; they were well focused on the story, and took turns to hold the book respectfully. Several children recognise simple key words and are beginning to read back sentences that they write themselves.

59. The book areas in each of the Nursery and Reception classes are well resourced and inviting. Children choose from these books and take them home to share with adults. Higher-attaining children are beginning to associate sounds with letters and to use this knowledge to help them to decode words. For Reception aged children, particularly, short literacy lessons, adapted from the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy, suit the requirements of young children well. These sessions promote the development of early reading, writing and spelling skills, while preparing children well for what they will meet in Year 1. Class discussions and well-focused play activities provide good opportunities for children to use their imagination with words. By the end of the Reception Year, children develop a strong interest in English. They recognise many simple everyday words, and the many children with English as an additional language are keen to express themselves confidently and articulately in the language.

Example of outstanding practice

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes alike is always very good and often excellent. What is planned indoors is always reflected in what is set up outside. As a result, the reinforcement of learning is extensive.

An open session of a wide range of well-planned activities, both indoors and outdoors, provided interest, stimulation and challenge for children to explore writing for different purposes. Children worked on the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They made little books indoors, created a beanstalk outdoors and role-played the story very enthusiastically. Learning was very strongly enhanced through excellent questioning and children worked to full potential.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**, often **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are eager, with very positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is very good and often excellent.
- Children are provided with a good range of practical opportunities.
- Considering their very low starting points, the number of children who are likely to meet the expected goals for their age, by entry to Year 1, is remarkable.

Commentary

60. Most children make very good progress from their starting point on entry. In the Nursery class, children begin to match, sort and count, using everyday objects. Teachers provide very good and challenging opportunities for children to develop mathematically in a range of contexts. For example, small group activities focused on counting and putting plastic bears into different sets were observed. Children in the Nursery are also beginning to learn about basic shapes, and understanding how to recognise them. Many children, especially those for whom English is not their home language, have to learn the English names of such shapes first and then to count accurately using English words for the numbers. Several, however, are very adept at matching objects and completing simple jig-saw puzzles. Most in this age group are not yet reliable in counting to 10. The use of number rhymes, games and songs enhances children's acquisition of numbers in English.

61. Teaching is consistently very good. Teachers provide very good practical opportunities to count. Examples were observed whenever children were asked to line up. On these occasions, children are involved in counting people in the line. Similarly, real situations are used to count objects. As a result, a significant number of children understand that knowing numbers helps to solve simple problems, involving the use of language, such as, “We need one more”, “ We must take one away”, “How many altogether?” or “How many left?” By the time they enter Year 1, a significantly large number of children, bearing in mind their low starting points on entry, are able to respond accurately to such questions. This was observed in a very well taught session, when children received focused teaching in a series of one-to-one interactions with a nursery nurse. They confidently spoke about the numbers of spots on ladybirds and responded to ideas, such as “What if we added one spot?” and “...say the ladybird now had a spot less”.
62. Teachers plan well and use a good range of teaching methods. Teachers and nursery nurses make learning interesting, making skills fun to acquire. They include talk and mathematics in all topics and themes, seizing opportunities in cooking and making models. Children are encouraged to apply what they know to practical problems, for example, in counting the fruit to be shared and eaten. Games and practical activities develop number skills, when the more able receive greater challenge. Children gain knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Again, teaching is consistently strong, with lots of questions that are designed to encourage learning.

Example of outstanding practice
<p>Simple ideas that are set up innovatively meet young children’s needs and interests, producing excitement and motivating them to count and learn about numbers.</p> <p>Children have ample opportunities to learn to count and calculate when engaged in purposeful play. For example, a group of children were engaged in conducting a survey of favourite wild animals. They went round with their clip boards, looking just the part. They asked appropriate questions and effectively recorded their findings. They were very excited by the activity and so talked about it with great interest, counting the latest results all the time. One child called out excitedly, “The elephants are winning.” Another explained that “...most children like elephants”.</p>

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of opportunities is planned to explore the locality and to build knowledge and understanding of the land around.
- Resources are good and used well to extend children’s curiosity about the wider world, including distant places.
- Very good support is provided in small groups.

Commentary

63. Teaching is particularly good in aspects of the area that require exploration and investigation. Children enjoy learning and remain totally absorbed in a good range of activities inside and outside. For example, during the inspection, the topic was *Growth*. It was well under way in Nursery and Reception classes alike, building children’s understanding of plants and what they need in order to grow well. Children in the Nursery age group also learnt about how they have grown from babies themselves. Several children were observed enjoying activities in a make-believe *Baby Clinic* that was set up to encourage role-play. Speaking, listening, new vocabulary and building confidence were all part of the learning, as well as acquiring insights into how clinics operate. Children also explore real everyday objects and learn about scientific ideas. Learning about senses, including ‘taste’ led to ideas about good food, and what human beings

need to eat so that they grow healthily. Older children, in the Reception class, grew their own cress from seed and used it later when they made sandwiches. Other opportunities linked to the theme of *Growth* were equally well planned. For example, children were given the opportunity to observe tadpoles grow into frogs. Teachers and nursery nurses work very closely as a team, making effective interventions to point out to children what they need to do, learn or watch in order to increase their understanding. Excellent emphasis on talk and directed questioning are apparent in this area of learning as in all others. This good provision helps children to identify similarities and differences, for example, when examining objects and artefacts carefully. The adults extend children's ideas, understanding of words and confidence in using them.

64. Resources of a good range and quality are used very effectively to support learning. Children thoroughly enjoy experiences with sand, water and malleable materials, such as play-dough and plasticine. They use paint and mix different colours, and a few higher attainers know some of the basic colour mixes, explaining that "...yellow and blue can make green together". They use different materials, such as paper, card and textiles, to develop cutting and joining skills while making models such as bridges, aircraft and rolling vehicles with large and small bricks in the outdoor space. They are beginning to develop understanding of how some materials undergo change when they are mixed with others, such as ingredients in recipes or different constituent materials in play-dough or papier-mâché. However, it is noticeable that several children struggle with language when they attempt to ask questions about how things work. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop simple computer skills, using the mouse to play games that require clicking and dragging to move images on the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a good range of indoor and outdoor activities.
- In this area, nearly all children are on course to meet the expected goals for their age.
- Resources are good and effectively used to enhance learning.

Commentary

65. Good teaching promotes children's physical development well. In Nursery and Reception classes alike, a well-developed outdoor play area offers many opportunities for children to run, jump, practise balance and exercise with rolling toys. This good provision has a positive impact on learning. Good links are established with all other areas of learning, including the development of personal, social and emotional skills. For example, children learn to share equipment well with others and how to use space efficiently. They pedal and push rolling toys with increasing control and steer them with confidence.
66. Nearly all children achieve the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. They move about with confidence showing understanding of the spatial needs of others, avoiding unnecessary collisions. Staff always provide calm and sensitive support and emphasise safety. They show very good understanding of how young children learn. The range of large and small outdoor resources, such as a play-house, trikes and bricks, is used well to challenge children both physically and imaginatively. The outdoor provision is effectively shared between children of Nursery and Reception ages.
67. In addition to their outside area, children also have access to newly erected climbing equipment in the main playground. This provision further develops children's awareness of space and helps older Reception children especially to add more advanced skills in swinging, climbing and balancing to their repertoire.

68. To develop hand and eye co-ordination, children are taught to hold pencils correctly and to paint carefully with brushes. Similarly, use of simple cutting and joining tools, such as scissors, glue and masking tape, adds varied opportunities to develop precision in control of finger movements. Again, links with other areas are developed well, as these physical skills are nearly always acquired in the context of “junk” modelling with recycled materials or while using construction toys, kits or art materials. For example, children were observed using cardboard boxes very carefully to make models of chosen animals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and a high proportion are on course to attain the goals expected at the end of the Reception Year.
- Children work in a well-ordered environment in which very good teaching provides plenty of opportunities for them to express their ideas creatively.
- Children are provided with good quality resources and their gains in learning are highly valued.

Commentary

69. By the end of the Reception Year, nearly all children are able to use a range of materials to produce attractive and interesting creative work. They use a range of good quality materials and media, as well as recycled boxes and card, crayons, paint, malleable materials, brushes and pencils to make pictures, three-dimensional objects, collage and models. As a result, children are given many opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form. Effective teaching ensures the involvement of all children. The displays in Nursery and Reception classes are attractive and encourage responses. Children’s paintings of animals in the rainforest and their observational work on plants are of a high quality. During an observation the Nursery children were engaged in a printing activity, using different shapes and colours. The development of skills was focused very well, which resulted in good learning. Children were very keen to show their work to adults, who praised them and encouraged them strongly and so self-esteem was thus served very well. This high-quality teaching and learning is typical: a range of interesting and stimulating tasks is planned consistently well. Children particularly enjoy their role-play in the well set-up imaginative areas. Staff actively monitor children’s involvement and engage in their role-play with them. This excellent practice encourages children to join in and a high standard of interaction results.
70. Children enjoy singing and making music. Each of the Nursery and Reception classes benefits from the teaching of a specialist. For example, in an excellent lesson, children sang enthusiastically and worked with total involvement. Planning is good and shows a clear understanding of the needs of very young children. Opportunities for children to use an outdoor “musical fence” of recycled items are also provided. They have a good repertoire of songs that they sing from memory. In a class assembly, children recreated the story of *Handa’s Surprise* with shadow puppets, and presented it confidently to the whole school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' reading skills are well developed, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good.
- Co-ordination and management are effective.
- General vocabulary across the curriculum is insufficiently developed.
- Matching and/or adjusting work to the needs of different groups of pupils is inconsistent.

Commentary

71. At the end of Year 2, although overall attainment is well below average, the proportion of pupils who are attaining at expected levels for their age has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This finding is reflected in the overall trend in results of National Curriculum tests, which is above the national trend. Many pupils are identified as having special educational needs; many others are at early stages of acquiring English and, of these, a few are identified in both groups. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school directly from overseas with only a limited working understanding of English. Although provision for all these groups of pupils is always at least satisfactory, and often good, they understandably struggle to match the attainment of other pupils, as they do not have enough time to make up the deficit.
72. Standards in classes for older pupils are also rising. However, improvements in teaching and the introduction of strategies to support pupils who do not make expected progress have not been in place long enough to impact fully in the oldest classes. Nevertheless, overall standards in Year 6 are now simply below, rather than well below, normally expected levels. No significant gender or ethnic differences in pupils' learning or achievements were observed by the time pupils leave. However, careful analysis of results in the past indicated lower achievements amongst boys than girls. As a result, the subject co-ordinator acted promptly, introducing good procedures to ensure that what is taught is equally interesting for both sexes, especially in writing. This provision is currently in place.
73. Owing to interesting teaching, pupils concentrate well. They pay careful attention to each other and to adults. However, when they speak, many pupils do not project their voice sufficiently. Their general vocabulary is also restricted. Although progress occurs, these features remain evident. By Year 6, more pupils are confident in projecting their voice adequately and they unfailingly respond well to opportunities to contribute to classroom discussions and questioning. However, a continuing lack of general vocabulary and use of rather restricted patterns of spoken English typify many pupils' speaking, particularly those with special educational needs and, understandably, many of those at early stages of acquiring English. While teaching of literacy is invariably good, the only direct teaching of how pupils should project their voice was observed in an after-school drama club. Furthermore, opportunities to correct spoken English, eliminating one-word or colloquial phrases and modelling richer uses of vocabulary, were often missed.
74. Pupils' achievements in reading show a great deal of improvement since the last inspection. A rise in standards is largely due to the impact of a stronger emphasis on helping pupils to relate sounds to letters. In the current Year 2, more pupils are reading with accuracy and understanding than in the past and several higher-attaining pupils read with fluency and expression. In Year 6, pupils are independent readers, with the exception of a few with special educational needs, and those who have arrived in the country recently, speaking only little English. Several higher attainers are able to explain their likes and dislikes about what they read and nearly all pupils in older age groups enjoy the freedom and responsibility of choosing

their own books. Continuing good teaching ensures that many of them enjoy reading. A few pupils are now attaining at a level higher than that normally expected. They have developed the skills of thinking about what might happen next in stories and how to infer authors' intentions. Pupils gave good accounts of how information can be found in libraries. Pupils also explained how the Internet could be used as a source for research. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified promptly, owing to teachers' good ongoing assessments of achievement and very thorough procedures for tracking pupils' progress. Good support is then provided to meet these pupils' needs.

75. Standards of writing are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, several pupils write successfully in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes, reaching expected levels for their respective ages. Several older pupils, for example, produced persuasive texts such as a blurb for the cover of a book or an advertisement for a new product. A few higher-attaining pupils in successive classes show imaginative use of vocabulary, which is an improvement since the previous report. Many pupils achieve well in acquiring and developing their writing skills. However, the writing of lower-attaining pupils and even that of several average attainers reflects their speech, with grammatical errors and limited vocabulary. Weaknesses in spelling are also apparent. Good teaching focuses on the importance of choosing words carefully and being precise. As a result, pupils learn to make the most of their vocabulary. Those with special educational needs and those at early stages of English acquisition are supported well and, by Year 6, good progress is now evident.
76. Teaching is consistently good through the school. This quality represents considerable improvement since the last inspection. Most teachers have good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and use effective questioning and appropriate resources to motivate their pupils. A weaker aspect is that planning does not always ensure different tasks to match the full ability range of pupils in the class. Nevertheless, good levels of support from knowledgeable teaching assistants go some way to reducing the influence of this shortcoming. Overall, teaching impacts well on pupils' learning. However, in Years 1 and 2, a high proportion of pupils are at early stages of acquiring English, which sometimes reduces their rate of learning. Conversely, pupils' positive attitudes to work and their willingness to try and make the most of whatever is on offer are strong contributory factors to the quality of learning.
77. Provision in the subject benefits from effective leadership and management, including good in-service training to keep methods up to date. The subject is satisfactorily resourced and a strong emphasis has been placed on providing additional time to raise standards in literacy, although this practice has negative implications on what is available for other subjects. Stories and topics used in literacy make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with the inclusion of legends, texts and stories from a range of cultures. Assessment and monitoring procedures include a thorough system to track progress, and are used to adapt teaching, learning and what is taught. The school's action plan reflects a good awareness of the subject's strengths and what needs developing further. For example, speaking and writing are prioritised in the latest plan, which is evidence that the co-ordinator, headteacher and senior staff carry out accurate self reviews of what is provided.

Literacy skills across the curriculum

78. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. An emphasis on the specific vocabulary of other subjects is good. Writing is also used across the curriculum to record work in history, geography and other subjects. However, time spent on extra sessions to support reading and writing has the effect of squeezing available time that is available. As a result, opportunities to experience the specific styles that these subjects use are not always fully explored. Furthermore, worksheets are frequently used to record findings in science. As a result, pupils do not develop enough ideas of their own in writing up their predictions, methods and results of experiments. Shortage of time and the need to record something in writing are likely reasons for this use of worksheets, especially in younger age groups.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Past weaknesses in provision have a negative impact on standards in Year 6, although attainment is beginning to rise through the school.
- Pupils often understand place value very thoroughly.
- By the end of Year 2, attainment is already much higher than that indicated by the results of National Curriculum tests in the last inspection report.
- Teachers often direct their questioning to particular pupils, so the learning needs of individuals are frequently addressed well.
- Nearly all pupils have a good attitude towards acquiring mathematical skills, which contributes to good learning.
- In a few classes, not enough different tasks are provided to meet the full range of prior attainments that are present.

Commentary

79. Standards in Year 2, and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, are showing signs of rising. Current standards of attainment, both in work that was sampled and in lessons, are below average in Year 2, and well below average in Year 6. This picture is different from that observed in English. In mathematics, teaching in the past did not always ensure that skills were taught and acquired in the necessary order. Gaps in learning occurred and this situation is still affecting standards in classes at the top of the school. Only two years ago, at the time of the last inspection, for example, it was simply satisfactory rather than good. Currently, teaching in Year 6 is often very good, resulting in high quality learning and reflecting the local authority's recent identification of the teacher as a potential leading teacher in the subject. However, standards remain well below average, despite pupils' currently good progress and achievements. Such difficulties are not evident amongst younger pupils, who were not in the school at the time when teaching was of weaker quality. As a result, their progress is more assured and their attainment has risen from very low levels on entry to a standard that is just below average. Their achievements, bearing in mind their starting points, are therefore good. As younger pupils move through the school and benefit from good teaching, overall standards are likely to rise.
80. In classes from Years 3 to 6, good teaching is now ensuring that basic skills are acquired well. For example, knowledge of place value is emphasised strongly. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils used 100-squares, counters and similar resources to solve problems based on real situations. Nearly all of them understood how to use techniques of partitioning, even with quite large numbers, separating tens from units to make calculations easier. Adept use of place value in this and similar ways was apparent in samples of work from pupils in Years 4 and 5. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs are supported adequately and also make good progress in understanding of number and the four main operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In Years 4 and 5, assessments and tracking of progress show that the proportion of pupils working at levels above those normally expected for their age is steadily increasing. Extra sessions using nationally recommended lessons are employed to help pupils who fall behind to catch up again. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress at similar rates to other pupils, based on good inclusion in all such strategies of support. Standards in other aspects of the subject, such as shape, space and measures, data handling and probability, are also improving. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils made a lot of progress in understanding and applying ideas of translating shapes.

81. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 2, which were the latest available at the time of the last inspection, were in the bottom five per cent nationally. From that time on, owing to improvements in teaching and learning, standards have risen considerably. Currently, attainment in Year 2 is a little below average. In samples of current work, many pupils demonstrate good understanding of numbers up to 100, add and subtract simple sums, and recognise “odds and evens”. A few higher attainers go beyond, adding and subtracting larger numbers accurately. They know how to work out simple multiplication sums and share, group and divide quantities successfully. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils practised their addition of three single-digit numbers in their heads. Nearly all of them understood that the order of addition is unimportant, so the numbers can be changed around to make the sum easier. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well, which ensures that they know what to do in order to make progress. Skills build well on what is learnt in Year 1. During the inspection, in a lesson in Year 1, pupils’ knowledge of the names of shapes was consolidated. In Year 2, this work is extended well, when pupils learn how to recognise shapes by noting some of their simpler properties.
82. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know their pupils’ needs well and often direct questions to individuals during the opening part of lessons. This good technique provides pupils with a challenge at their own level. It also means that they listen well to hear their name and any question that might come their way. As a direct result, behaviour and attitudes towards the subject are invariably good, often very good. Planning is a strong contributory feature to the good teaching that was observed. It was very good in Year 6, including annotations about what would help individual pupils and different groups, such as higher attainers or those with special educational or other particular needs. The main points of the lesson were also indicated. As a result of this good practice, each subsequent teaching point was very clearly made, so that pupils’ understanding was made easy for them and the pace of learning was also very good.
83. Co-ordination is good. Records and procedures to assess and track progress are used well to set pupils’ targets. The co-ordinator’s action plan contains good ideas to continue raising pupils’ achievements and to ensure that the present quality of teaching and learning is maintained. Audits of resources have been successful in ensuring that funding is wisely spent on necessary items to support teaching and the acquisition of skills through the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. Opportunities to use mathematics as part of learning in other subjects are taken as and when they occur. In work around the school, graphs, tables and charts provide evidence that pupils’ mathematical skills are developed effectively to display results and record outcomes in other subjects, such as science and geography. In displays of pupils’ art and design, shapes and patterns are frequently evident. A good example was how Year 5 used printing techniques to achieve repeated images in the style of Andy Warhol.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall attainment is rising and the achievement of most pupils is good.
- Pupils’ lack of use of appropriate scientific terms and language is a weakness.
- Photocopied worksheets, often the same for a whole class, restrict challenge and reduce opportunities for pupils to practise their writing about predictions, the shape of experiments and results.

- Pupils enjoy science and it contributes to their personal development, especially in the area of health and safety.
- The subject is not yet monitored as rigorously as English or mathematics.

Commentary

85. Since the previous inspection, standards in all elements of science have shown significant improvement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Studies of life processes and living things are often of a good standard through the school. The most recent results of Statutory Assessments and National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 reflect the overall improvement in work that was seen, with more pupils reaching expected levels for their age in both groups than was the case in either 2001 or 2002. Nevertheless, overall attainment is below national averages. Work in the current year indicates that Year 2 pupils are likely to attain standards below the national average, while standards in Year 6 remain well below.
86. As in mathematics, the legacy of weak teaching in the past is still apparent in the work of pupils in Year 6, which is partly the reason why improvement at this age has not been as rapid as in younger groups. For example, their skills in seeking patterns and evaluating results of observations are limited. As a result, their written explanations frequently miss overtly scientific points, while they might include irrelevant details. In one telling example, a pupil wrote about the aesthetic appearance of a utensil that had been used to hold liquids, failing to include specifically scientific ideas. Characteristics of the year group itself are another contributory factor to pupils' low attainment. The present Year 6 class has a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs that are likely to have slowed their learning. A few others are recent arrivals from overseas, whose understanding of English is still at a fairly early stage. The attainment on entry of several other pupils in the class was very low. Against this background, despite low attainment, their achievements are often good. Recent good teaching of the class and focused support based on carefully identified needs are the main reasons for the improving picture.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, including some good features. Teachers' knowledge of the different parts of the subject is sufficient to ensure that pupils acquire experience of the correct skills. For example, magnetism was studied adequately in Year 3, and properties of materials with respect to the passage of sound in Year 5. Teachers have begun to use analyses of pupils' results to establish and address weaknesses, and to plan for improvements. Examples of good practice were seen during the inspection in different year groups. For example, pupils in Year 4 were observed using ramps to investigate friction. They rolled toy cars down the surface to explore which would move more swiftly and why. Learning was good, as pupils were shown how to obtain evidence by careful observations and measurements of timings. In Year 5, pupils investigated and made observations to identify the type of materials through which sound travels. These lessons were well organised and provided pupils with first-hand experiences. A good emphasis was placed on developing and using knowledge of fair testing. Most pupils in the Year 5 lesson progressed well, making significant gains in their learning. However, in some lessons, too much adult direction of pupils' experimentation and ideas results in little opportunity for them to set up experiments independently. Conversely, teachers' management of pupils' behaviour, the use of resources, and contributions from teaching assistants are strong. These attributes help pupils to enjoy the subject and to concentrate on learning. A weaker aspect of provision is that pupils' own literacy skills are not used enough to write down their work. Insufficient guidance is offered in the use of scientific writing, because pupils are often given photocopied sheets to record results. As a result, when they are required to rely on producing accounts of their own, they have not had enough practice to achieve a good outcome. The use of these worksheets also results in a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
88. Teachers use praise and encouragement well, using the school's system for rewarding good work and behaviour fairly and frequently. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in science lessons and they work well together in groups and pairs, sharing information. Personal

development is a strong feature when they collaborate effectively, making observations and carrying out tests and experiments. This good co-operation is another improvement since the last inspection and it clearly has an impact on raising standards. In sampled work on living things and human processes much emphasis was apparent on issues of healthy eating, safety and looking after the environment, adding a further dimension to pupils' development of values and ideas of good citizenship.

89. The co-ordinator of science is experienced and aware of needed further developments in the subject. For example, although a start has been made, not enough is yet done to monitor teaching, learning and attainments, and then to react to the information by adapting teachers' future planning. However, self-evaluation is generally good and has established correctly that developments are required to improve pupils' investigative skills and their ability to set up and record their own experiments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

- What is taught has improved since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the computer suite is good.
- Overall standards are below average.
- Co-ordination of the subject is good.

Commentary

90. Through the school, work in pupils' folders indicates that what is taught is at about the expected level for each year group as pupils move up the school. This represents improvement since the last inspection and stems from recent improvements in how the subject is organised and managed, including the development of a computer suite. However, nearly all work is currently generated in this suite, as opportunities to use new technology in classrooms are severely limited by shortages of adequate hardware. As a result, the use of pupils' skills to support work in other subjects, at times when the suite is not timetabled for their class, is limited and opportunities to practise basic skills are also restricted, and so overall attainment is below average.
91. Planning and good recent co-ordination have ensured that teachers' expertise is sufficient to build on what has previously been taught. Adequate programs and other software are available to support learning in the computer suite. All pupils are included well in these arrangements and adults are particularly aware of supporting pupils with special educational needs, so that they too make satisfactory progress.
92. The quality of teaching and learning that was observed directly in lessons is good. It is based on good planning and good use of available resources and support staff. All elements of the subject were either observed or evident from samples of pupils' work, which represents considerable improvement in what is taught. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils used their own usernames and passwords to log on and used *Flowol2* to program the switching of pedestrian crossing lights. Later in the lesson, they were able to model their results in a simulation, testing whether their control procedures had worked or whether any changes might be needed. The teacher was a very good role model in the use of new technology, as he used an interactive projector to make a presentation of the main points to be learnt. In a good lesson, this time in Year 6, pupils consolidated and then acquired further skills in the use of *Excel* to design spreadsheets. They showed good understanding of how to type formulae into the required cells.
93. What was seen in lessons and in pupils' folders indicates that overall standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average at the end of both stages, largely because skills are not sufficiently applied to general work and activities in other subjects and partly because progress was not as good

in the past as it is now. Nevertheless, in the computer suite, pupils' achievements are nearly always sound at least. In Year 2, for example, pupils used word processing to begin re-drafting examples of their own writing. They understood several conventions such as the spelling squiggle, the use of buttons to delete unwanted text and how to use the arrow keys. However, their typing was often very slow indeed, which is a possible indication of their lack of opportunities to practise at other times.

94. Co-ordination of the subject is currently good. The co-ordinator had already identified all the main weaknesses that were observed in the inspection and has drawn up an action plan to take the school forward. Determined planning has ensured full entitlement to the curriculum for all pupils and initial monitoring is indicating that standards have already risen. The provision of the computer suite has been a considerable element in this improvement, as it has resulted in systematic teaching and learning in all classes.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Work on display indicates that pupils take classwork into the computer suite; for example, to word process stories or to use programs to support work in art and design. Computer generated patterns that reflect the styles of artists such as Mondrian or Kandinsky have been used. Presentation documents have been prepared and older pupils learn about and use spreadsheets.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were not main focuses in the inspection and so overall judgements of provision have not been made. Nevertheless, samples of work were inspected and three history lessons were observed and so standards of what was seen in these contexts have been reported. In religious education, it has proved possible to report on overall provision.

Geography

96. In geography, samples of pupils' work and what was on display were of around the expected level for the relevant age groups. For example, in Year 1, pupils observe and identify features of their school, such as its position on the road and why it has a gate. What is taught introduces topics and themes that build on previous ideas progressively. In Year 2, for example, pupils knew some facts about human and natural features on the Isle of Struay and made simple comparisons with Harlesden. They also knew several simple facts about places to which staff or other friends of the school had taken *Barnaby Bear*. In Year 3 pupils learn about climate differences in different continents. By Year 6 they are able to comment about the water cycle and map reading with reference to South America. Photographic evidence suggests that pupils experience a good range of activities including geographical work during a residential school journey, as well as visits to places of geographical interest such as *The London Transport Museum*.

History

97. In history, too, standards of what was seen were broadly at expected levels. In Year 2, for example, pupils demonstrated good ideas about what makes someone historically famous. In their present study of Florence Nightingale, they recalled a great deal of information about her work, who she was, the reasons for her working as a nurse, and what she did to improve nursing care and hospitals. A few more able pupils described in great detail how Florence Nightingale was strongly indignant about the lack of national responsibility for injured soldiers and what she did to change the treatment of soldiers in field hospitals. This depth of knowledge represents good achievement. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils focused on how Anglo-Saxons lived. They were particularly interested in investigating a selection of artefacts, achieving well in uncovering what these objects might say about how Anglo-Saxons lived. In a similarly planned lesson, Year 5 pupils identified key facts in the life of Tutankhamun, as part of their study of

Ancient Egypt. Good links with geography had been established when they had earlier located Egypt on a map. The location of Ancient Egypt in time was then pointed out, reflecting good teaching based on well-planned opportunities for learning.

98. The recommended scheme of work has recently been adapted to include *Black History Month*. Required elements of the National Curriculum are included adequately in what is taught, although samples of work suggest that historical writing is not always of sufficient length or depth.

Management and co-ordination

99. Co-ordination in both history and geography has identified the need for more effective use of artefacts and visits to enhance what is taught, and the introduction of more rigorous monitoring and assessments of progress to ensure that improvements in attainment are maintained.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below expectations.
- What is taught does not take sufficient account of specifically religious ideas and contexts, or of pupils' own experiences as a significant resource and repository of knowledge.
- Religious education does not make enough contributions to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning about different religions.
- Monitoring of what is taught and how it is taught is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

100. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Samples of work suggest that only very limited amounts of writing are attempted. Based on the scrutiny of recorded work and discussion with pupils, their progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is not fast enough.
101. Regular weekly lessons are planned, but what is taught is not of a sufficiently consistent quality. Although pupils are expected to study the customs and beliefs of six important world religions, the distinctively religious aspects of themes that were planned in two lessons were not actually focused in practice. This weakness was reflected in work that was scrutinised. As a result, although many Muslims and Christians, as was apparent in a group that spoke to an inspector, have a good understanding of their own religion, their knowledge of other faiths was very restricted. Overall standards are therefore lower than those expected. Pupils understand and appreciate certain values, such as caring for and serving others, but not in specifically religious contexts. They acquire some knowledge of different ideas of God, and of different styles of worship. However, their knowledge is largely confined to basic facts about festivals such as Diwali, Christmas and Easter. In terms of stories from the Bible or of the story of Rama, most pupils are at early stages of understanding. One of the main reasons for this disappointing picture is that too few opportunities are taken to use the wide range of pupils' own experiences and membership of faith communities as a resource from which to draw information and insights. The presence of various religions in the locality around the school is similarly underused. Furthermore, the possibilities in religious education to teach pupils to write expressively about feelings, values and beliefs are not sufficiently explored to support attainment in literacy. Uses of information and communication technology are also not developed as a means of research in the subject.

102. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In two of the three lessons observed, unsatisfactory teaching occurred. Only in a lesson in Year 3 was it satisfactory. In this lesson, the teacher used resources effectively and her questioning resulted in many good answers from pupils about how Allah wants people to respect what has been created. Similar beliefs in other religions came to light because pupils were given opportunities to contribute knowledge about their own faith. For example, the wearing of turbans in Sikhism was explained when wearing of hijabs and topi was raised. However, opportunities to link with pupils' experiences of their own religion and, therefore, to share such knowledge with other pupils were missed in the other two lessons. Nevertheless, pupils' attitudes are good. Their behaviour was not an issue in any of these lessons. They demonstrate a positive willingness to learn about religions other than their own and to share personal experiences, when asked. The pupils listen intently to discussions and take others' ideas seriously.
103. Currently, monitoring of provision is not carried out either often or regularly enough. As a result, the rigour and focus required to improve methods of teaching and learning are at present unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

None of these subjects was a main focus in the inspection, so overall judgements of provision have not been made. Only comments about standards of what was directly observed have been included.

Art and design

104. Much of pupils' artwork on display around the building represents a very good standard of achievement. It begins in the Nursery and Reception classes, with children's work in the style of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (displayed during the inspection in the school hall) of very high quality. From the evidence of what was seen throughout the school, teaching focuses strongly on pupils' acquisition of skills. Learning is based firmly on studying the work of real, local and famous artists. Displayed work of pupils in Year 3, in the style of Monet, for example, is also of very high quality. Their use of impressionist techniques, reproducing features of both Monet's *Garden* and *Windmills*, demonstrates accuracy in choices of colour, as well as good understanding of Monet's original intentions. Pupils' work also features art from various cultures, including good historical links, when they reproduce styles such as those that flourished in ancient Greece and Egypt, and Tudor portraiture. Work on contemporary cultures from around the world is also evident. For example, in Year 6, pupils painted symbolic patterns and mixed colours very accurately, reproducing designs and images based on modern Aboriginal art from Australia. What is on display suggests that teaching focuses very well on the development of previously acquired skills, as progress is very apparent as pupils get older. Work is often very skilful, suggesting that pupils are taught to observe original paintings closely and to take mental note of features that their teachers point out. Three-dimensional work is also introduced well. In Year 2, pupils persevered well on mosaics, trying to reproduce the style of a local artist whose work is displayed near Harlesden Station. Examples of collage were evident and pupils' very good Ndebele dolls were displayed in Year 6.

Design and technology

105. No lessons in design and technology were observed. However, photographic evidence, planning and work on display suggests that the characteristic elements of the subject are known well to teachers and taught adequately. For example, throughout the school relevant opportunities that increase in difficulty are provided to draw up lists of ingredients for food items, or of components in products; pupils plan how to make models or artefacts; then they build them, based on their designs. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate the outcomes of their designs. However, based on what was seen, this element of the subject is weaker than designing and making. Technological challenges are provided. For example, older pupils recalled that when they were in Year 5, they designed and built shelters to withstand a 1kg weight, using only a set amount of paper. In Year 1, pupils have recently designed and made

objects with the use of recycled materials. Their results are of a good standard of achievement for their age. For example, their ideas demonstrate an understanding of the importance of designing an object that is sustainable with reference to the suitability and properties of the materials at their disposal. In Year 6, pupils designed and made slippers. This work is also of a good standard. The designs contain numerical information about required materials and components, such as quantities of petals and sequins, as well as plans of how and where to cut and join fabrics and other materials. The completed slippers show that pupils have used several appropriate techniques, including sewing, gluing and appliqué. Other interesting projects included cutting and observing the internal structures of different fruits by younger pupils.

Music

106. It was only possible to observe singing lessons. Teaching in these lessons was consistently very good and included one excellent lesson. It was based on specialist subject knowledge and good support from the headteacher, who sat in on the lessons and assisted very competently. As a result, pupils' standards in singing are high throughout the school and well above what is normally expected by the time pupils leave in Year 6. Singing of this standard adds much to the spiritual quality of assemblies. Pupils sing together very well, varying the volume of their voices to match words and moods. A few higher-attaining pupils have the confidence to sing solo to a very high standard indeed, as was seen during an assembly, when a soloist led the whole school. Pupils are able to hold tunes accurately, and to vary tonal quality, even while singing complicated syncopated rhythms. Various forms and styles are also evident. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 sang *Teddy's feeling sad today* with great aplomb, keeping the fast *Rock 'n' Roll* rhythms accurately throughout. The specialist teaching is very skilful, including showing pupils how to breathe properly and how to open their throat and to use their diaphragm, as well as introducing good musical language.

Physical education

107. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that all required elements of the curriculum are taught. In three lessons that were observed, the quality was never less than satisfactory and it was very good in a lesson in Year 5. This lesson featured dance and was shared between the class teacher and a visiting specialist from *City Academy*, a nearby secondary school. Very clear explanations of what is required, as well as the use of pupils' good ideas, resulted in a strong performance by many pupils. In the satisfactory lessons, teaching was didactic, so pupils had little opportunity to use their initiative to plan their own work. As a result, these other lessons offered little challenge to the higher-attaining pupils, who simply worked on the same skills as all others.
108. Regular swimming lessons at a nearby pool are provided in Year 4. Nearly all pupils attain the government's minimum safety standard and several exceed it considerably. Good extra-curricular opportunities are provided that enhance overall standards. Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided adequately during a residential school journey to the *Gordon Brown Centre*.

Co-ordination and management

109. Currently, management of these subjects does not include sufficient monitoring of provision. As a result, the rigour and focus required to ensure that teaching and learning remain effective are not in place.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

110. One lesson was observed, and teaching and learning were very good. At the previous inspection, a statutory policy for sex education was in place and the provision for personal, social and health education was satisfactory. No other judgements relating directly to this subject or to citizenship were reported. Development of pupils' personal, social and health education in addition to ideas of what it means to be a good citizen are currently provided in timetabled lessons known as *Circle Time*, as well as on occasions when such matters arise across the curriculum, as in, for example, science. The programme meets requirements and includes work on matters of health, personal safety and sex education. This programme helps pupils gain confidence, mix successfully with other people and know how to have a healthy lifestyle. Information about the dangers of the misuse of drugs is also provided. Good use is made of visitors with expertise in how to remain safe. Good citizenship and ideas of democracy are promoted in a School Council, which meets regularly. For example, in the lesson that was observed, pupils in Year 1 talked about arrangements in the playground and made suggestions for their council representatives to raise at the next meeting.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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