

INSPECTION REPORT

HERMITAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100936

Headteacher: Dr Abdul-Hayee Murshad

Lead inspector: Mr John Brennan

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 September 2003

Inspection number: 256401

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	284
School address:	Vaughan Way London
Postcode:	E1W 2PT
Telephone number:	020 7702 1037
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Sheree Russ
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hermitage Primary School serves a diverse community within the inner City of London borough of Tower Hamlets, which has many of the problems associated with high unemployment. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The number of pupils who join the school part way through their education is high. With 246 pupils from Reception to Year 6, the school is a little larger than most others. A further 38 children attend the Nursery. Most children come with an experience of books and number that is below that typically found and a significant number speak very little English. Over 80 per cent of pupils are of Bangladeshi origin; approximately 12 per cent of pupils are of white British origin, and there is a small number of pupils from several other minority ethnic groups. Thirty-six pupils are at the early stages of learning English. This is a high number. At 21, the number of pupils who have special education needs, either learning, emotional, or physical, is lower than most other schools. The school has been involved in a number of initiatives, most notably, Excellence in Cities. It was recognised as a Beacon school in 2000. The school works closely with its community, running a number of adult and family learning classes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Personal social and health education Religious education
9472	John Edmond	Lay inspector	
2153	Jane Lamb	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Geography History
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	Science Art Music
22173	John Evans	Team Inspector	English as an additional language English Physical education
21074	Mike Kenton	Team Inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has serious weaknesses. The progress made by middle- and higher-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. Standards are too low and have declined since the last inspection. Strong leadership has arrested this decline but although the quality of teaching is improving, there is a lack of common understanding of how to teach basic skills. The school currently provides **unsatisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology are too low and pupils do not achieve what they are capable of.
- Teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and children's education gets off to a flying start.
- Pupils who join the school speaking little English do really well and make very quick progress.
- Action taken to improve attendance is impressive and very successful.
- The provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural education is very good.

The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Until recently school leaders have not kept a close enough eye on standards and these have fallen considerably. Although the curriculum is now better planned, not enough has been done to address the issues for improvement identified as part of the last inspection and assessment procedures remain unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is unsatisfactory. Through Years 1 to 6 pupils do not learn quickly enough or as well as they could. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well below expected levels in English and below expected levels in mathematics, science and information and communications technology. Standards in reading and writing are particularly low. Although standards in speaking and listening are below average, given the high proportion of pupils who learn English as an additional language, achievement is satisfactory. Indeed pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make rapid progress against the targets set for them. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and from a relatively low base reach the goals children of this age are expected to achieve by the end of reception. Good use of teaching assistants for pupils who have special educational needs leads to them making good progress against their targets.

The school operates as a harmonious community and pupil's **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. They get on well with each other and respect differences. **Attendance** has improved rapidly of late and is now good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory.

Teaching is unsatisfactory. Training in how to teach basic skills has been inadequate and, as a result, many teachers are not up to date with successful teaching methods and expect too little of middle- and higher-attaining pupils. Because of this, many pupils do not learn as much as they should. Expert teaching and the very effective help of teaching assistants, mean that pupils who are just beginning to speak English learn quickly. The very good quality of team work in the Foundation Stage and very good teaching mean that children do particularly well in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills and in their personal development. Staff and pupils get on very well with each other. The respect and courtesy staff show for pupils set them a good example

Pupils enjoy a broad range of experiences within a curriculum that is enriched by a good number of trips and other activities. Full account is taken of pupils' differing cultural backgrounds. However, the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been poorly implemented. The school cares well for its pupils and is particularly good at seeking and acting upon their views. The school values parents' views and work closely with them. Links with the local community are extensive and of significant benefit to pupils and parents alike.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership is stronger than management. New leadership has given the school fresh impetus, arrested the decline in standards and stabilised the school. The school is now in a better position to move forward but plans for improvement lack detail. The governing body share in this new vision, are determined to raise standards and are beginning to monitor the work of the school more closely. They possess considerable expertise and potential.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard. They are pleased with how approachable the school is and how it seeks their views. The vast majority feel that their children are happy at school. This is a view shared by pupils who also say they like school. They feel staff are fair and that they are listened to. A few pupils feel that there is some name-calling and teasing in the playground. Inspectors found no evidence of this and pupils from all backgrounds played well with each other.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics, science and Information and Communications Technology.
- Improve teachers' expertise to teach key skills in these subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement through Years 1 to 6 is unsatisfactory. Standards in English are well below average, while in mathematics and science they are below average and have declined significantly since the last inspection. In the Foundation Stage children achieve well, so that by the time they begin Year 1 they attain standards usually expected of pupils of this age. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make very good initial progress, while pupils who have special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have declined since the last inspection, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- The achievement of middle- and higher-attaining pupils in acquiring basic skills in English is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils who join the school speaking little English make rapid progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs progress well.
- Children in the Foundation Stage progress very well and start Year 1 ready for the National Curriculum.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage make rapid progress to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Progress in literacy skills is particularly impressive, given the high proportion of pupils who start nursery school speaking very little English.
2. The school has not kept a close enough eye on standards. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been poorly implemented and insufficient attention has been given to equipping teachers with the skills necessary to teach basic skills. As a result, while the performance of schools nationally has risen, performance at Hermitage has declined.
3. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, results dipped markedly from previous years. They were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results were average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. However, given the good start that children get to their education in the Foundation Stage and in learning to speak English pupils do not achieve well enough through Years 1 and 2. In particular, middle- and higher-attaining pupils do not reach their capabilities. The test results of 2003 shows that standards have not improved.
4. In the past two years, results in National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 have declined dramatically. In the 2002 tests, results in English, mathematics and science were all well below average. Although, when compared with similar schools, results are above average in English and average in mathematics and science, pupils' achievement through the juniors is unsatisfactory. Once again, it is the achievement of middle- and higher-attaining pupils that is not good enough. The school has fallen short of the challenging targets it set in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.8 (14.9)	16.4 (16.3)
writing	13.3 (13.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.8 (17.3)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25 (25.3)	27 (27)
mathematics	25 (28.1)	26.9 (26.6)
science	26.4 (25.6)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. In contrast to the performance of middle- and higher-attaining pupils, expert teaching results in rapid progress by pupils who are the early stages of learning English in learning basic skills. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational has been able to maintain consistency through a period of great change at the school. This, and the increased number of teaching assistants now working in the school, mean that pupils make good progress. The rate of progress by pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those who have special educational needs is now quicker than at the time of the last inspection.
6. The ineffectual nature of much of the leadership since the last inspection, the high turnover of staff and resultant changes in co-ordinators for many subjects, have also had a detrimental effect on standards and achievement in other subjects. In particular, achievement is unsatisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT.) The school places great value on educating pupils for a multicultural, multi-faith world and sees Religious Education (RE) as a way of achieving this. It has, therefore, maintained a sufficiently broad education and ensures that pupils meet the expectation of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

7. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. Attendance is now good. The school operates as a harmonious community. Much of this is due to the very good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent work of the learning mentor has led to a dramatic rise in attendance.
- Pupils have a high level of confidence and self-esteem because adults show great concern for their feelings, value their opinion and treat them as partners.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and respect differences.
- Pupils do not always take enough care with their work and on occasions can become inattentive and chatty.

Commentary

8. Pupils respond very positively to an ethos which places great value on the individual. The headteacher knows the pupils well and, together with all other staff, shows, through personal example, how people should treat each other. As a result, a feeling of mutual respect pervades

the school and pupils respect themselves and others. Relationships are easy, with teachers watchful of pupils' feelings and individual needs. At its best this relaxed atmosphere, both in the playground and in the classroom, creates a world where pupils work and play in a calm and considered manner and one in which they talk confidently to adults, co-operate well with one another and listen carefully.

9. On occasions, particularly when work is not demanding enough and teachers are not insistent enough on the quantity or quality of work, pupils do not give of their best. The presentation of work deteriorates and productivity declines. It is often the more able pupils, who are expected to work independently, that are prone to this and it is one of the reasons why they do not make the progress they are capable of. Not all teachers are successful in establishing routines or employing strategies to aid good behaviour in lessons. In a few lessons, therefore, pupils become easily distracted and can become giddy and noisy. Because of the open plan nature of the classrooms undue noise adversely affects learning in neighbouring classes.
10. The school purposefully seeks pupils' views on school and uses a School Council to give pupils a voice. This helps develop a sense of citizenship and demonstrates pupils' very positive views of school. Pupils clearly enjoy school and each other's company. Pupils say that they like school and this view is backed by their parents. Pupils take their role in building a harmonious community seriously. This is often evident in small but significant acts. This was the case in Year 1 and 2 classes where, without prompting, two pupils sat next to another who needed help, providing support and encouragement. A few pupils were concerned about teasing but little evidence of this was seen of this during the inspection. Indeed, pupils of all backgrounds mix well with each other and there is little bullying or name-calling to be seen or heard. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

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	40	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	207	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0

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

11. Provision for pupils' development of spiritual awareness is good. Teachers and pupils are open in sharing their spiritual experiences and showing respect and reverence. For example,

older pupils listened to an Islamic chant and were able to talk about how the music made

them feel and what images it conjured up in their minds. Assemblies make a good contribution to spiritual awareness and include discussion of different beliefs, for reflection and for pupils to express their own views.

12. The excellent example set by the staff of respect for different faiths and customs, and their unfailing courtesy and respect for the pupils, has a very positive impact on pupils' development of respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. The school is good at helping pupils distinguish right from wrong. Pupils take part in discussions and decide on their class rules; some teachers are more consistent than others about putting the rules into practice, but pupils generally understand and abide by them and school is a safe and pleasant place to be.
13. Opportunities to serve the school community, so as to develop a sense of responsibility, are strong. Pupils in Year 6 had an impressive understanding of their duty to set a good example to younger pupils in their class and spoke very sensibly about their experience as "playground peacemakers". Teachers provide many opportunities, in lessons and in assemblies, for pupils to work together in pairs and small groups, to share equipment and to help one another. As a result, pupils show patience and tolerance.
14. The school promotes very good appreciation of the wide range of cultures represented in its community. The work of all staff in making all pupils feel valued leads to pride and confidence in their own cultures and interest in those of other pupils. There is a breadth of art, music, story and dance, which pupils appreciate and take a pride in, as well as breadth of experience of food, customs and costumes from many cultures. These aspects of culture are introduced in many different lessons and activities and permeate the life of the school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	1.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

The statistics above do not do justice to the work of the Learning Mentor.

Because of this learning mentor in the last eighteen months attendance rates have improved by over ten per cent and are now running at over 95 per cent.

Parents respect him because he has to deal daily with the issues they have to deal with. He is in tune with his community, as a parent of a child at the school, and a governor, he brings empathy to his work. Parents respect him and listen to him. He builds on this solid ground by excellent working practices. If a child is absent or even just a little late, contact is immediate. He knows well who the families are that need his support. Far from pressurising parents into sending their children to school, he offers practical solutions to the pressures they face. He has faced them himself. However the 'eye is always on the prize' – getting children to school, so that they can learn. As the evidence shows he has done this remarkably well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Although improving, the current quality of education is **unsatisfactory**. Important weaknesses in teaching slows pupils' progress. Recent improvements in the leadership of the school recognise this and have begun to take appropriate action, although much remains to be done. The curriculum is broad and enriched by a good range of activities. Pupils are well looked after and their views valued. Strong partnerships have been established with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, in particular in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, where during the inspection weaknesses in teaching were more evident. The teaching of basic skills, especially in English, is underdeveloped and leads to unsatisfactory learning. In contrast, teaching across the Foundation Stage is very good and is the major reason for children progressing so well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the very good rate of learning made by pupils who are just beginning to learn English and to the good progress made by pupils who have special educational needs. Expert teaching by minority ethnic achievement teachers results in the rapid progress of pupils at the early stages of learning English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Gaps in teacher's knowledge of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies.
- Low expectations of middle- and higher-attaining pupils.
- Weak management of pupils and lack of clear routines in a few lessons leads to restlessness and lack of productivity.
- Assessment of pupils' learning lacks rigour and accuracy.
- Teaching assistants and minority ethnic achievement teachers promote the rapid acquisition of key skills for pupils who are beginning to learn English.
- The quality of relationships between teachers, other staff and pupils aids pupils' personal development.

Commentary

15. Since the last inspection there have been few whole-school co-ordinated attempts to promote improvements in teaching. Although there are signs that new leadership and management have adopted a more proactive approach to staff development, these are at an early stage and unsatisfactory teaching remains. Past changes aimed at improving teaching have not been followed up well by those with responsibility for them and so, even among established staff, inconsistencies in agreed practice remain. Pupils are not learning quickly enough and so achievement, particularly in English, is not what it should be.
16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. This is because teachers and nursery nurses plan well, basing what children are to learn on very good assessment of capability and need. Relationships are very strong, provision is well organised and close attention is paid to establishing good learning habits. A strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition of language and, progress of the high number of pupils with little English is particularly good.
17. Minority ethnic achievement teachers, backed by the work of skilled and well-targeted teaching assistants, help pupils at the early stages of learning English to do really well. Teaching stems from a very good understanding of how pupils with little English learn. Emphasis is given to promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills and to equipping them with a basic vocabulary that enables them to join in lessons fully. Teaching is based on a precise assessment of need, with individual needs fully understood and addressed in the course of individual and group work. Careful consideration is given to resources and the use of signs and symbols to get learning moving quickly. All in all, the school, including class teachers, promotes equality and recognises the importance of maintaining a feeling of high self-esteem among pupils. This the school does well, so that pupils build good attitudes to work.
18. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good quality help from teaching assistants within the classroom, which ensures that good progress is made. Tasks are modified to reflect pupils' ability and needs. Teaching assistants are good at monitoring pupils' understanding and have due regard to targets in individual education plans.
19. While teachers have begun to adopt the approaches needed to implement the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, practice is patchy. It is better in mathematics than in

English. Organising pupils into ability groups for mathematics in the juniors goes some way to helping teachers overcome the problem of teaching the wide ability spread found in dual-aged classes. Teaching is at its strongest in Years 3 and 4, where a more consistent approach is adopted across the three classes. It is here that teachers are more likely to use strategies that involve all pupils in listening to and answering probing questions. More is expected of pupils here than in other year groups and pupils respond well to this by persevering and thinking more deeply about their work.

20. While similar examples of good teaching can be found in other year groups, it is in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 where weaknesses are more evident. Teaching betrays an insecurity as to how to teach key aspects of literacy, for example, phonics and to a lesser extent mathematics. Too often teachers' questioning techniques lack sophistication and many pupils contribute little or do not listen with intent. Such teaching does not set up group work well enough and so pupils who work alone, often the middle- and higher-attainers, do not work with enough purpose or understanding. In many classes accomplished teaching assistants ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English or who have special educational needs are involved in whole-class work. They will quietly echo what the teacher is talking about to individual pupils and follow this up well by asking further questions in group work, testing and deepening understanding.
21. Some teachers, again most notably in Years 3 and 4, recognising the importance of setting boundaries and establishing working patterns at the beginning of the year, give careful attention to this. This valuable use of time sets the tone, not only for the rest of the lesson but for further lessons and consciously builds a workmanlike atmosphere. In a few lessons teachers pay insufficient attention to routines and fail to follow up consistently behaviour that they had earlier challenged. Where this happens, pupils become chatty and do not work hard enough. For example, in a poor ICT lesson in Years 1 and 2, in which pupils were using the computer suite for the first time this year, pupils were given no guidance as to how to conduct themselves. Several were allowed to wander or were left unchecked when not working. Occasionally, excessive noise disturbs neighbouring classes.
22. In general, teachers expect too little of middle- and higher-attaining pupils. Planning does not often enough detail learning specifically for them and the quality and quantity of work expected of them is not made clear enough. Time boundaries are rarely set and sloppy work can go unchecked. This has an especially marked effect on handwriting and standards of writing in general. This is exacerbated by the lack of progress made by the school in improving assessment procedures. Teachers' assessment of pupils' current level of work is not grounded well enough in the National Curriculum. Targets that are set for improvements tend to be too broad and repeat themselves over time. No reference is made to targets in lessons, so expectations are not made sufficiently clear. More often than not marking is not referenced to targets, with some work left unmarked or praise given for work of a shoddy nature. Even the most able pupils find it difficult to explain aspects of their work that they need to improve. Systems for tracking pupils' attainment are at an early stage but are crucially undermined by weaknesses in teachers' assessment and the absence of objective testing. All of this makes it difficult for teachers to pitch work at the right level and to keep learning moving along at an appropriate pace.
23. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is a consistent strength of teaching. The respect that adults have for one another rubs off on pupils. There is little tension in classrooms and pupils invariably get on well with one another. Teachers care deeply for their pupils and in turn pupils feel able to turn to them for advice and help. Teachers are quick to challenge discrimination of any sort and pupils of differing backgrounds say that they feel valued. Parents speak particularly highly of this aspect of the work of the school. The best teaching exploits the cultural richness of the school for the benefit of all. For example, in a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teachers' careful selection of fruits from across the world enabled pupils of Bangladeshi origin to share the names of these with other pupils and for pupils to hold, smell and taste fruits they had never heard of. Such sensitive teaching builds respect and is

successful in developing pupils' personal qualities. The use of expert teaching in music leads to challenging and stimulating work. The unreliable nature of many of the computers in school and the varying confidence level of teachers means that there are few examples of ICT being used to aid teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (21%)	14 (37%)	12 (32%)	3 (8%)	1 (2%)	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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by a good range of activities. It is better documented than it was at the time of the last inspection. Accommodation is good and resources for learning adequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Literacy Strategy and, to a lesser extent, the National Numeracy Strategy are not implemented well enough to help standards in English and mathematics to rise.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum for the pupils.
- The curriculum takes account of the needs of groups of pupils who learn English as an additional language to ensure that all pupils have equal access to lessons.

Commentary

24. At the time of the last inspection, the school's curriculum was not well documented to show what was to be taught in each subject. Progress has been made recently under the direction of the headteacher and the curriculum is now better planned. In the intervening period between the inspections, the school has not done enough to ensure that a suitable curriculum is developed for English and mathematics.
25. While the school's curriculum is broadly based and is designed to hold a good level of interest for the pupils, it is not succeeding in providing a good enough basis for teaching key skills in English and mathematics. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is added to by specific work on pupils personal, social and health education. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they make a really good start to their schooling. It helps them to learn well in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development and in their personal and social education. Those who are learning English as an additional language derive particular benefit from the close analysis of their skills in language and the tasks designed to help them build sequentially on what they already know.
26. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped. They do not take enough account of local and national guidance and the school has not kept up with good practice that has developed elsewhere. There are pockets of expertise in the school, which are reflected in the quality of teaching. In Years 3 and 4, for example, a good range of teaching methods is used to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils. Not enough is done by the school to ensure that pupils acquire the key skills in literacy and numeracy to prepare them for secondary education.
27. The school groups pupils according to their prior attainment for mathematics. This works well, because teachers are able to plan the curriculum more precisely for the ages and abilities of the pupils. This is not the case in English and adds a further degree of difficulty to the

planning. The headteacher is currently reviewing these arrangements. The school provides a good range of activities to enhance the curriculum and add interest for the pupils. A strong emphasis has been placed on the arts and the school has received national recognition for this dimension of its curriculum. Pupils recall the creation of some pieces of work with pleasure and they are proud of the displays in the community. Helpful partnerships have been formed with local businesses to establish reading partnerships. Residential visits are organised for older pupils.

28. The school's accommodation provides a good setting for primary education and the resources available to teachers and pupils are in reasonable supply, although many books in the library are worn and outdated and several computers unreliable. Staffing levels are good and recent changes to the deployment of teaching assistants have enhanced the school's capacity to help pupils who have special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils and ensures their health and safety well. It provides high levels of support, advice and guidance, but these are still not based firmly enough on the monitoring of progress. The school is very active in involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Proper child protection measures are in place and the school enjoys close and effective relations with the appropriate outside agencies.
- The school is very clean and the revised health and safety practices are of high quality, ensuring a safe environment.
- Poor assessment leads to weaker guidance than could be given.
- Staff are caring and fair and help those with behavioural problems successfully; as a result, pupils are happy.
- There are strong systems for finding out what pupils think of school.

Commentary

29. The school ensures that it constantly keeps its child protection practices up to date and in line with those laid down by the local education authority. All staff know what to do, and those who have dealings with pupils are given specialist training each year. All links with outside agencies operate very effectively in the pupils' interest. The school pays particular attention to health and safety and has recently revised its procedures thoroughly, with proper governors' involvement. As a result, pupils and staff work in a very clean, litter-free environment, which is healthy and safe. Risk assessments are carried out by the headteacher and his deputy, who have both received relevant training. All equipment is tested regularly and fire drills are carried out each term. Access to the Internet is strictly controlled.
30. The school pays great attention to supporting and caring for its pupils, which results in happy children. Staff all know pupils well and there is always at least one member, often several, with whom pupils can and do develop a trusting relationship. Pupils consider that teachers treat them fairly. The Learning Mentor pays particular attention to helping those pupils who have difficulty in conforming; they trust him. However, the school has not yet developed its assessment procedures well enough for it to be wholly sure that all its academic advice is well founded.
31. Because of the large number of ethnic groups the school has a very flexible attitude to the needs of new pupils. The usual, highly effective induction arrangements include home visits shortly before newcomers join and the provision of support from school councillors in the first days. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage, particularly those for whom English is not

their first language, speak highly of way the school helps them and their children settle into school.

32. The school's attitude to consultation with pupils is very good. Pupils speak highly of this and feel that their views are listened to. This helps them develop a positive view of school, contributing to their good attitude. As part of its annual school improvement planning process it surveys pupils' views. Pupils know that the school really does listen to their views and that it will try to accommodate them, if at all possible. For example, their ideas on improving the playground were implemented.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are very strong. Those with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school really values parents and listens to their views.
- Links with the local community are extensive, varied and valuable to pupils.

Commentary

33. The school has introduced a system of two parent representatives per class, who regularly meet the headteacher and representatives of the governing body. These provide a very good forum for parents to put their views forward. In addition, as part of its school development planning process, the school surveys parents' views. Parents appreciate the inclusivity of this approach and the school is responsive to parental suggestions. Parents are welcome at any time and the school has made available a room for their use and invites them to a range of social events. The vast majority of parents say that they feel able to approach the school. The school has introduced a very effective mechanism to deal quickly with any complaints. Because of this open approach parents are, by and large, very satisfied with the school.
34. The school communicates with parents on a regular basis and takes every effort to ensure that information is available in parents' home language. Annual reports to parents are extensive and very informative documents, which tell parents what their children know, can do and understand in the context of the curriculum. However, targets noted for improvement are often too vaguely drawn for progress to be validly measured.
35. A useful number of parents help in various ways in the school. Members of the parents' representative group hold regular sales of work for the benefit of pupils. Parents are involved satisfactorily in the promotion of their children's learning at home. Most help with reading and other homework.
36. The school plays a full part in the life of the local community and in a sense is almost an extension of it. It also has very many links with many aspects of the wider community. This helps create a 'family' ethos and gives the school a good understanding of local needs. Strong efforts are made to use, and be of service to, the local community. For example, pupils really gain from their frequent visits to sporting and cultural venues, while the school runs workshops for parents in basic literacy and computing skills. These are highly valued by parents, both as a way of improving their own skills, but also as a forum for parents to meet together.
37. Benefits are also gained from practical links with local businesses, which, for example, provide reading partners for a number of pupils. Through the school's Beacon status, links with other schools have been established but in recent times have not been particularly effective in improving expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

38. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have declined and the school has not kept a close enough eye on standards and pursued priorities that had little effect on progress in basic skills. A much changed governing body and a relatively new headteacher have arrested this. Leadership is now good, having articulated a new vision for the school characterised by a determination to raise standards and remove barriers to progress. Plans to help realise this vision are not focused enough and, although the school runs smoothly, management is only satisfactory. Governors now help shape plans for the future but are only just beginning to monitor the work of the school more closely, and so governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, governors and staff with management responsibilities share a commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly in relation to improving achievement in basic skills.
- The headteacher knows the school and its pupils well. He has made a good start in creating a culture in which the views of all, including pupils and parents, count.
- Development planning lacks rigour and does not tackle current weaknesses in performance directly enough.
- The school does not track pupils' progress closely enough.

Commentary

43. The current headteacher is taking a determined approach to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. He brings a sincere commitment and intimate knowledge of the school and its community to his work. The deliberate mechanisms he has set up to seek and act on the views of parents, pupils and staff have galvanised the school into a united community. This, together with a review of the structure and responsibilities of other staff with management responsibilities, have put the school on a more secure footing and in good position to improve achievement
44. Much has been done to rid the school of barriers to improvement.
- The school has redirected its efforts towards the key task of improving teaching and learning in basic skills and has rid itself of unnecessary distractions to this crucial aim.
 - Resources have been improved and are having a positive effect on the achievement of some pupils. For example, the decision to increase the number of teaching support staff is part of the reason why pupils at the early stages of speaking English and pupils who have special educational needs are doing well.
 - The school now has a more settled workforce and one that has been carefully created to achieve a good ethnic mix, reflecting the cultural identity of the school. This has enabled the headteacher to alter the management structure of the school and to reassign subject responsibilities. New structures have the potential to work well. The headteacher and senior leadership team meet regularly to review progress to date and to bring views from different phases of the school together. In turn, individual members of the senior leadership team are beginning to create effective teams within the differing phases of the school. However, the ability of leadership, including subject co-ordinators, to monitor effectively and evaluate their areas responsibly varies considerably. While the school has begun to help improve the exercise of management, by, for example, ensuring that all subject co-ordinators are governed by common working practices, much remains to be done to improve the capability of key staff.
45. The headteacher has a broad view of the current strengths and weaknesses of the school, but the school's ability to tackle these is undermined by shortcomings in:
- (a) Action planning.
 - (b) The way the school tracks the progress made by pupils.

46. The school improvement plan is lacking in important detail. Not enough thought has been given to what the plan will achieve. Criteria to measure success are ill-defined, so that evaluations of past actions are largely confined to confirming completion, rather than assessing their impact on teaching and learning. No reference is made as to who will monitor the progress, which further undermines the ability of the governing body, the headteacher and senior staff to judge impact. For example, last year's plan refers to training for staff in setting targets for pupils and methods to involve parents in this. It is clear, however, from talking to pupils, looking in books and talking to some parents, that practice is patchy. Few teachers, for instance, refer to targets in their everyday teaching or in marking. The impact of this potentially successful tool for school improvement is therefore lost because of poor action planning and a lack of thoroughness in monitoring implementation.
47. The school improvement plan and the staff development plan do not tackle identified weaknesses in a direct enough way. For instance, the headteacher is concerned by the rate of progress made by middle- and higher-attaining pupils. Action to address this stops short of diagnosing why this happens. Action under the banner of raising achievement is not grounded in identifying and removing the causes of this and remain rather vague. The staff development plan is also undermined in a similar manner. The headteacher describes a school in which too little attention has been given to the implications of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and, in particular, the skills teachers need to teach these well. However, the training plan does not address this head on. Some training is identified in the action plans of the English and mathematics co-ordinators but the school development plan does not place a high enough priority on this.
48. Apart from the Foundation Stage and for pupils at the early stages of learning English, the school has made insufficient progress in the key issue of improving assessment, a weakness identified at the time of the last inspection. The school has recently begun to track pupils' progress more closely. However, this is at a very early stage and places too much emphasis on teachers' own assessments of pupils' abilities. On the whole, teachers are not skilled enough at doing this and the reliability of the data currently collected is, therefore, open to question. It does not form a secure basis for management to identify underperforming pupils early enough or to take action to address their needs. The absence of objective data on which to judge performance further impairs this.
49. Careful thought has been given to the make up of the governing body. There is a good balance between governors who reflect the ethnic diversity of the community and the judicious appointment of governors with particular expertise. This ensures that the governing body has credibility with parents and has the potential to provide expert support for the headteacher. The governing body has made a good start in redirecting the work of the school and is more involved in decision-making and in ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities. All in leadership positions, including the governing body, take equality seriously and ensure that a robust racial equality policy is actively implemented and monitored. The finances of the school are now on a firm footing and are targeted at improving standards. Governors apply the principles of 'best value' to the use of funds and monitor expenditure closely. While they actively consult with parents and pupils they do not as yet track the academic progress of the school closely enough to be able to challenge the performance of the school in a well-informed way.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,258,511
Total expenditure	1,241,732
Expenditure per pupil	4,156

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,726
Balance carried forward to the next	52,505

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is one of the strengths of the school. Many children start school with very limited speaking and listening skills in English. Staff concentrate particularly well on the development of language and social skills; as a result, their education gets off to a flying start. They achieve well because the teaching is very good and the curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are well matched to children's needs. Provision is extremely well organised and managed, and children's progress carefully monitored. A very strong team of well-qualified and experienced staff work together well and plan activities carefully. Adults manage children very well and the high ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are met. There has been significant improvement in teaching, learning, and leadership since the previous inspection and parents are very happy with the flying start their children get.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because very good teaching ensures that they are challenged and encouraged to work hard and to take responsibility for themselves.
- Children generally reach or exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year, even though standards were below average when they started.

Commentary

50. Very good teaching ensures that children comfortably reach standards that are typical for their age by the end of the reception class. Staff ensure that children learn to behave correctly so that a good climate for learning is established and children establish habits that will serve them well as they progress through school. This is best done by setting clear expectations and using older reception children as good role models for new starters. For example, when the children start at the nursery they are encouraged to take part in mathematics sessions and games with the older children. In this way they learn quickly how to behave, listen and join in, while older children's self-esteem and personal development is boosted. Staff also expect the children to be responsible, taking every opportunity to encourage this. For example, they mixed paint, and made prints of shapes successfully on their own, after being shown what to do. Whether it is taking turns at the computer or working together in the 'pretend' play area, opportunities to acquire key social skills abound. This leads to a harmonious working environment, well-suited to the need of children who are just beginning to learn English or who have special educational needs, who pick up new words and skills from working alongside other children. As a result, even at this stage, many children are able to maintain attention and sit quietly and are confident to try new things and use their emerging skills. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage many can work on their own for extended periods, behave sensibly and share resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, nursery nurses and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills and children make rapid progress.
- Children benefit from some bilingual staff who speak children's home languages.

Commentary

51. Many children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception but development in speaking lags behind. Many children have insufficient language to express themselves fully in English, although they are fluent speakers in their own language. Achievement, therefore, is very good. Adults keep detailed records of the language development of children, and those at the very early stages of learning English are particularly well taught by a specialist teacher and bilingual assistant, who are particularly effective. Their work is characterised by a good understanding of the needs of very young bilingual children, high expectations of what they are capable of and well-organised and exciting activities that motivate them. For example, in a good lesson, children observed and drew a friend, writing simple words or copying captions about them, developing their handwriting skills. This was turned into a class book of 'My Friends'. Children develop speaking and listening skills well through 'pretend' play, but children mainly talking alongside others, rather than with them. The development of reading skills and learning sounds also has high priority, particularly for reception children. Many activities are based on the development of these skills, including the reinforcement of initial sounds and the reading of simple words. Teachers make good use of well-known rhymes, which contribute positively to the development of these skills. The school works hard to involve parents. For example, all children are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults question children very well and use a wide variety of activities to support learning.
- Many opportunities are taken to develop mathematics in other areas of learning.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are very good. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills and particularly the development of mathematical language. When planning activities for the children great care is taken to use every opportunity for extending mathematical skills such as counting, sorting and comparing. It is the quality of questioning that makes the most of these. Children are encouraged to explain their thinking, which also has a good impact on their speaking skills. For example, when playing a game with 'hidden' shapes children took turns to describe the mystery shape. Teachers are always on the look-out to use everyday opportunities to practise basic skills, for example, by counting after the register is called. This emphasis on number, searching questions and practical application of mathematics in everyday activities results in children who are confident with numbers, are beginning to count in their heads and carry out simple numeric calculations. By the end of reception children are in line with what is expected of children of this age and are ready to work on the first level of the National Curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

53. Too little work was seen to make an overall judgment of provision or standards in this area of learning. Children worked purposefully with construction toys but needed help to use computers purposefully. Teachers plan to cover an extensive range of work, which includes making the most of the varied environment that surrounds the school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use of the outdoor play area leads to very good achievement in children's co-ordination.
- Children's fine control, such as for holding pencils or handling tools, is generally good.

Commentary

54. The children are reaching standards close to what is expected in terms of their capacity for larger movement. As many enter the nursery with undeveloped physical skills this represents good progress. This is due to the effective use teachers make of a well-equipped outside play area to develop children's physical capabilities and co-ordination. Teachers plan a good range of activities in which children encounter a varied range of equipment. There are ample opportunities to throw, catch, climb, and ride various vehicles. Teachers and other staff intervene very well to reinforce basic movement. This area is also used well to develop mathematical and language skills through outdoor activities. For example, a teacher worked with a child bowling hoops, extending his skills but at the same time developing his language skills by questioning, counting and commenting. By the end of reception children use space well and have awareness for the safety of others.
55. Teachers ensure that children develop their manipulative skills by handling pencils, crayons, brushes, scissors and small toys. They give the children opportunities to explore with a wide range of tools, and offer good practical help where a child is becoming frustrated. Children's hand-eye co-ordination is satisfactory and leads to pleasing creative and construction work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

56. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. Planning indicates a very good range of activities, with particular emphasis on using well-set-out 'pretend' play areas to develop children's imagination and language. Work on display showed a good range of media being used.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

- Standards of attainment are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Weaknesses in aspects of teaching mean that many pupils do not learn well enough in lessons.
- The school does not have clear enough plans for raising standards and improving the quality of education.

Commentary

57. When the school was last inspected in 1998, standards of attainment were below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Raising standards in Years 1 and 2 was a key issue for the school to address. In 2003, standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6 and, until recently, the school has lost sight of the importance of teaching its pupils key skills in reading and writing. Where action was taken following the last inspection, it had too little effect. Training for teachers has been inadequate and many are not up to date with successful teaching methods. Shortcomings in teaching have gone unchecked. As a consequence, many pupils, particularly those in the middle and upper groups, do not learn as much as they could in lessons and they underachieve. The school has begun to take action, but the implementation of strategies to raise attainment is patchy and contributes significantly to the serious weaknesses in pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, the teaching in some lessons is good and pupils learn well. The teaching provided for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is very good and, of all the pupils in the school, they make the best progress.
58. Currently, standards of attainment in reading and writing in Years 1 to 6 are well below those expected nationally. In speaking and listening, standards are better than this but still below average. Given that almost 80 per cent of the pupils learn English as an additional language, achievement in speaking and listening is satisfactory, but this is not the case in reading and writing, where it is unsatisfactory.
59. When they are teaching pupils to speak and listen, teachers are conscious that, because a high proportion are at different stages of learning English as an additional language, there is often a need to check that pupils have understood the meaning of words. In the best examples, teachers use imaginative techniques to give pupils visual help. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher provided a set of pictures related to a story to help the pupils learn some new vocabulary and put the events of the story in order. Another teacher, in the same lesson, added further explanations in the pupils' mother tongue to sort out a misunderstanding. The pupils learned very well and gained confidence in using the new words correctly. This expertise is the major factor in making sure that pupils whose English is at an early stage make very good progress. By comparison, in other lessons, teachers' explanations are woolly and few opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their speaking. Teachers' skills in teaching pupils how to listen well are similarly varied and, where teaching techniques are unsophisticated, pupils often become restless and inattentive.
60. In reading, the range of teaching methods is limited and the school has not implemented the National Literacy Strategy well enough to ensure that work is pitched at levels that build on what pupils already know and to offer them a challenge. Although the needs of pupils who are at the early stages of English as an additional language are assessed with precision, this is often not the case with pupils in the middle and upper ranges of ability. Planning takes too little account of their age and stage of attainment. The school has not succeeded in implementing consistent approaches to teaching phonics (the sounds made by letters) and pupils are often

unsure as to how letters, or combinations of letters, sound in words. Some potentially high attaining pupils in Year 2, for example, were puzzled about the 'ch' sound and others in the same group could not see that 'rooftops' could be split into two words to make it easy to read. This lack of knowledge of good teaching methods is common to some but not all classes. In a Years 3 and 4 class, high levels of expectation on the part of the teachers and the use of penetrating questions helped the pupils pick up new vocabulary about 'teeth' quickly and read the new words accurately. High attaining pupils in Year 6 enjoy books and some have established preferences for authors. In more 'difficult' books, the meaning sometimes eludes them because some of the vocabulary is beyond them.

61. Standards in writing are well below average and it is in this aspect of English that pupils achieve least well. Their written work is poorly presented. Standards in handwriting are poor and even the oldest pupils have, in many cases, yet to master a steady, cursive style. Although the teaching covers a reasonable range of work, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Rarely in lessons do teachers clarify what they expect of pupils in terms of quantity, quality or the pace of working. Consequently, pupils work with little sense of purpose or urgency. Their workbooks include pieces of work that are unfinished. While there are examples of good marking that guide pupils well, they are outnumbered by inadequate marking. Many of the pupils' workbooks include work that has not been marked at all. Spelling is often not corrected to help pupils learn from their mistakes and even some of the oldest pupils make habitual errors with simple spellings.
62. The school has recognised that there is an urgent need for action to improve achievement, raise standards of attainment and to establish a better quality of teaching and learning. Currently, it is not well placed to achieve its ambitions. The co-ordinator is very new to the role and, despite having had little chance to audit the school's provision, is determined to provide leadership for improvement. Where changes have been agreed in recent months, for example, in the policy for marking, checks on successful implementation have not been sufficient and inconsistencies remain. The action plan is weak and is unlikely to provide a secure basis for improvement. Its objectives are unclear, criteria against which the effect of action taken can be measured are not included and there is no practical action to counteract low expectations or gaps in teachers' knowledge. Although all classes devote a reasonable amount of time to English, variations are wide and time is used inefficiently and ineffectively. For example, in some classes as much as two hours a week is set aside for independent reading, but these sessions have had little effect on raising standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The school has a broad curriculum and many subjects provide opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing, speaking and listening. Too few opportunities are taken and teachers' planning for lessons in history, geography, science and religious education does not specify the skills in reading and writing that might be used. During the inspection, classroom computers were not used as an aid to pupils' writing. In some of the better lessons, teachers seized moments of opportunity to extend pupils' vocabulary by giving them a chance to learn and use words that were specific to the subject. In a physical education lesson in Years 1 and 2, some of the pupils who learn English as an additional language did not understand 'face one another' or 'stand opposite one another'. The teacher who was assessing pupils' understanding of instructions spotted the problem. A quick, practical demonstration and regular repetition of the terms meant that the pupils concerned learned well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new co-ordinator has put in place useful new systems of grouping pupils, planning and training for staff, which shows early promise.
- The achievement of pupils through Years 1 to 6, although improving, is unsatisfactory.
- Recent improvements in teaching result in satisfactory teaching, with examples of some good teaching in the juniors.
- Not enough attention is given to marking and assessment to set targets for future work.

Commentary

65. Pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards which are below expected levels; standards have declined since the last inspection and pupils' achievement has not been as good as it might have been. Improvements in planning, grouping by ability in the juniors and additional training are already showing signs of success. So, although some inconsistencies in teaching are still evident, it is now satisfactory and in the juniors there are examples of good teaching. The rate of pupils' learning is now picking up, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, who are better served by setting. However, the full impact of improvements has yet to make up for deficiencies to date, and has yet to raise standards. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are beginning to learn English are particularly well taught and achieve well.
66. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and her experience and determination are already making a difference and improving the quality of teaching and the rate of learning. Training is now better targeted and draws well on outside consultants to ensure that teachers are brought up to speed on the approaches needed to teach the National Numeracy Strategy. New planning procedures have also been introduced, which are beginning to ensure that work is more closely matched to the full range of abilities. However, much remains to be done to make up for lost time and to establish consistency among a high turnover of staff.
67. The relationships between teachers and pupils is a consistent strength of teaching. This instils a confidence in all pupils, so that they feel able to seek help, and, when required, explain their thinking. The hallmark of the good teaching in the school is challenge, which building on the base of good relationships, sets pupils problems to solve, giving scope for them to plan how to proceed. This suits the needs of higher-attaining pupils in particular. For example, in a lesson in Year 6 the teacher's careful demonstration enabled pupils to discover new ways of multiplying large numbers, thus equipping them with a skill that she expected them to use in real-life situations. However, examples of problem-solving are still too rare, so that pupils' ability to apply what they know is underdeveloped and causes unsatisfactory achievement. In some instances a lack of clear routines and expectations of behaviour results in a chatty atmosphere, particularity in group work. This is most commonly found in the infants, where it slows learning, leads to poorly presented work and can cause some disruption to neighbouring classes.
68. Despite training, gaps remain in teachers' knowledge. So that, although teachers follow a pattern of teaching outlined in the Numeracy Strategy, it lacks rigour and, in particular, is not well enough matched to pupils' differing capabilities. The new planning framework, which places an emphasis on matching work to ability, is at an early stage of implementation and is not used in a sophisticated enough manner. While overall learning intentions are clearly described, work planned for differing abilities in groups lacks detail. At its worst, pupils of all abilities do the same work. Because pupils who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English benefit from the help of teaching assistants in group work,

it is often the middle and higher attainers who achieve the least. To some extent, in the juniors, grouping pupils by ability has overcome this problem by ensuring that the spread of ability in any one class is minimised.

69. Marking, a weakness identified in the last inspection, remains a weakness and gives pupils little guidance on what they need to do to improve. There have been recent improvements in assessing pupils' capabilities and tracking progress, but these are still at an early stage. The use made of assessment is weak and any setting of targets for groups of pupils is ill-defined.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Although there are some examples of mathematics being planned to link with other subjects, this is still at an early stage of development and is heavily dependent on the confidence of individual teachers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are too low, especially for more able pupils.
- Planning and assessment are insufficiently rigorous.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the subject.
- The school makes good use of its own resources and those available in the locality.

Commentary

71. The standards attained by pupils throughout the school are below those expected nationally and pupils are not achieving as well as they should. This is especially true for the more able pupils. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. The samples of work seen showed that over the past year pupils had not covered enough work, written work was poorly organised and presented and much of it was unfinished. However, work seen during lessons was much closer to the expected levels, and discussion with pupils showed a much greater knowledge and understanding than could be assumed from their written work. Year 2 pupils were acquiring sound knowledge of the five senses. Year 6 pupils were able to explain how they would plan an investigation and had a satisfactory understanding of how to make their investigation fair. They were able to suggest the use of graphs and charts in their investigation.
72. Teaching in science is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, aspects of teaching were good. Teamwork between teaching and teaching assistants was consistently strong and is the major reason why pupils who have special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of speaking English, learn well. Relationships with pupils were very good, which allowed them to work confidently and enjoy the science. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were very excited by the chance to use dental mirrors to examine each other's teeth and were careful to follow the teacher's advice on hygiene.
73. However, in the work samples, teachers' marking was poor and did not provide sufficient guidance on how to improve the work; nor did it encourage pupils to complete unfinished work. Unfinished work was also a problem in lessons seen. Pupils do get down to work but they work too slowly and teachers do not do enough to raise their expectations of how much work they should do and how carefully they should present it. This leads to unsatisfactory achievement.

74. The planning of the curriculum for science is complicated by two factors; the mixed-age classes and the topic approach. There are advantages to both these factors, such as good links across subjects and good examples from older pupils; but they demand the most rigorous of planning and assessment and these needs are currently not met. Lesson plans do not always take sufficient account of the different expectations there must be of more able pupils and those who are a year older than the others. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware of the requirements of the National Curriculum and are not able to use the descriptions of what pupils should know and understand at different levels, in their assessment and planning. These factors are contributing to low standards and achievement.
75. The school does, however, make good use of its resources, including the pond and wild area of the playground, and of the resources around the school. Visits, such as that to Mudchute enlarge pupils' horizons and increase their enjoyment of the subject.
76. The science co-ordinator, who has only recently taken on the responsibility, has a clear idea of what needs to be done in terms of planning and monitoring the teaching of science, and the school's capacity to improve standards in science is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Computers are unreliable.
- The school runs successful classes for the local community.

Commentary

77. When the school was last inspected standards of attainment were in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since then, standards have declined. While the co-ordinator has plans to improve provision, past shortcomings have not been tackled purposefully enough and pupils underachieve.
78. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory, but weaknesses in the way the curriculum is organised and machines that are poorly set up and unreliable undermines progress. Teachers are clear headed about what they want pupils to learn and in the best lessons show pupils new skills for them to apply to their work. For example, in a lesson on databases in Years 3 and 4, the teacher showed pupils some of the new functions of the database that he wanted them to use in follow up work. Although he managed this successfully, his efforts were hindered because the large interactive screen, most useful for demonstrating, was broken. Skilful questioning ensured that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English picked up and used new words associated with ICT. The careful pairing of pupils who were less confident with those who were more confident, together with readily available help from teaching assistants, ensured that pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English progressed well. However, such pairings do not enable higher-attaining pupils to push on quickly enough or work on more complex tasks. The teaching of groups of pupils working at computers is not as strong as whole-class teaching at the beginning of lesson. Adults often visit pairs or individual pupils, either to sort out a problem with the machine or help pupils who are stuck. Not enough thought is given to spending dedicated time with particular groups of pupils to provide reinforcement or extra challenge.
79. Where teaching is less successful the lack of clear learning intentions leads to pupils largely playing at computers and it is here that achievement is at its worst. This was the case in a lesson in Years 1 and 2, in which pupils drew a picture of their choosing. Pupils were not

shown any particular functions of the program to use or given a defining purpose for the picture that could have linked to other subjects. The lack of routine and low expectations over behaviour in the suite resulted in some pupils working in a chatty, aimless way, while a large number of pupils did not produce or learn enough.

80. Until recently pupils' experiences of ICT were largely dependent on teachers' individual decisions. This resulted in pupils of the same age covering different aspects of ICT. The introduction of a planned scheme of work has overcome this and pupils now experience a suitably broad curriculum. However, not enough thought has been given to overcoming the challenges of having two year groups in each class. Pupils of all ages and abilities largely complete the same work. This holds back the more able pupils and does not allow pupils to acquire new skills in a progressive enough manner. For example, pupils in a Years 1 and 2 class were only just beginning to explore a painting program, and while this initial experience suited the younger or less able pupils well, it was not demanding enough for older or more able pupils. The school has attempted to overcome this by providing teachers with a 'ladder' of skills that pupils work their way up by using a range of programs. However, this is not used consistently through the school and teachers have too little idea of the current level of pupils' work and do not pitch work well to meet the need of pupils' age or ability.
81. The computer suite is a spacious workplace, with ample room for pupils to work at desks and at computers. While there are enough computers for one between two, several of these are unreliable. They often stall or do not start properly. This is not helped by a lack of clear routines, which means that pupils do not always log on or log off in the correct way. Pupils' work is not stored systematically and they encounter difficulties in finding previous work. This makes it difficult for teachers to see what pupils have done before.
82. The school operates a successful course for parents, which several parents speak highly of. This serves the community needs well, and is not only helping parents to acquire skills for themselves but also deepening their understanding of how their children use computers at school. The school has a small number of laptops which it lends to parents and pupils, often those who have attended a course in school, so that they can practise skills further at home. The newly appointed co-ordinator has an action plan for improving ICT but this lacks detail and, in particular, what this school intends to achieve by implementing it.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. Although there are computers in the classrooms, there is little evidence of their being used in lessons. Pupils' experiences are, therefore, largely limited to the weekly ICT lesson. While teachers do attempt to match the development of ICT skills to others subjects, this is heavily dependent on the expertise of individual teachers. The use of computers in other subjects is, therefore, patchy and not as well thought out or as widespread as it might be.

HUMANITIES

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in history or geography, as only one geography lesson was seen. Teachers' planning was looked at, last year's pupils' work examined and a discussion held with the co-ordinator.

History and Geography

84. In the lesson seen, which was an introductory lesson about the importance of sight in discovering our world, standards were in line with expected levels. History and geography are planned well and the curriculum is fully taught. There is a good use of the national schemes of work and samples of pupils' work are kept to show what level they are achieving. Pupils from Year 6 who talked about last year's work were interested, knew key facts in both subjects and understood about different sources of evidence and investigation. They were

very interested in environmental issues and local history. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has worked hard to extend the resources for the subjects, which are good and well organised.

Religious education (RE)

Provision for RE is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- RE is used to good effect to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and speaking and listening skills.
- Visits to places of worship add an extra dimension to RE.
- Too little emphasis is given to written work in RE.

Commentary

85. One lesson was observed, planning and previous work examined and discussions held with pupils and the co-ordinator.
86. The curriculum for RE is well organised and fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils study a range of other religions and have a satisfactory understanding of other faiths. Older pupils understand the relevance of RE as a guiding force by which many people live. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory knowledge of significant religious characters and festivals. These range across a suitably broad number of faiths. This element of RE is given added flavour by regular visits made to a variety of places of worship. This helps give pupils an empathy and respect for the belief of others that carries forward into their personal behaviour. The wide ethnic mix of staff provides an extra resource for pupils to learn first-hand about other faiths. Teachers are very open about their own beliefs and draw well on these and the beliefs of other pupils to bring RE alive.
87. The emphasis in many RE lessons is on speaking and listening rather than a written response to RE and so there was little written work evident in work saved from last year. This has the advantage of enabling RE to contribute well to pupils' spiritual development, as they reflect on matters raised in lessons. For example, in Year 6, a pupil described a piece of religious music as 'reminding me of a sunny morning.' However, the downside is that RE does not provide an effective vehicle for developing pupils' writing skills. The RE co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a strong commitment to RE and provides satisfactory leadership and management. Resources, particularly those for the study of other faiths, are good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

A small number of lessons were seen in the following subjects, planning was looked at and discussions were held with pupils and with teachers.

Art

88. Current provision in art appears, from the evidence available, to be at least satisfactory, with standards in line with national expectations. There are some very high quality pieces of work on display, but many of them were done some time ago. Pupils in Year 6 were able to talk well about work on display, describing it in terms of quality and using appropriate 'art' language. The new co-ordinator for the subject acknowledges a need for further in-service training for herself and for class teachers.

Design and technology (DT)

89. The school chooses to link the study of design and teaching to part of broader themes that encompass a number of subjects. While this has the advantage of giving DT some relevance, its distinct nature can be lost. When this happens the design technology aspect of lessons can become squeezed. In one lesson pupils were cutting up pieces of fruit, describing their smell and taste. While very effective questioning and good organisation ensured that this lesson made a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills, it did little to further their skills in DT. Analysis of planning indicates that this can be the case in other DT projects, limiting pupils' opportunities to design, make and evaluate products.

Physical education

90. Two lessons were observed. In one, the teaching was good and, in the other, it was unsatisfactory. In the well-taught lesson, pupils learned well and made good progress in developing skills in throwing, catching and striking. The lesson was pacy and reflected the teacher's good knowledge of effective teaching methods. The pupils enjoyed the lesson, took part enthusiastically and worked well in pairs. They made a good start at learning how to evaluate their own and others' work. Standards of attainment in the lesson were sound, although some pupils are at an early stage of learning how to catch. Pupils' progress was monitored closely and the teaching assistant augmented the learning with words of advice and encouragement.
91. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils did not learn enough, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory and detracted from the lesson's effectiveness. Pupils did not listen well enough to benefit from demonstrations and, because they were inattentive, the pace of the lesson was slow.

Music

92. The school makes good provision for music throughout the school. Standards of attainment in the areas of the curriculum observed during the inspection were in line with national expectations, and achievement was good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school employs a part-time music specialist who teaches infants and juniors and also advises teachers throughout the school on materials and resources. Teaching is consistently good; the rhythm games and songs which form the basis of all lessons are skilfully adapted to the needs and abilities of each group. Pupils are challenged and stimulated and very much enjoy their music lessons. Younger pupils can copy and improvise rhythm patterns and sing with good rhythm and pitch. Pupils in the oldest classes can perform and combine complex rhythms and maintain their part in two-part arrangements, sometimes taking the lead part instead of the teacher. Pupils are confident and willing to perform and listen to each other. There is good ongoing informal assessment but formal assessment has not been developed. Music plays an important part in the life of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. It was only possible to see one lesson of PHSE.
94. This is an emerging subject for the school, encompassing sex education and drugs education and incorporating time when the class meets together to discuss a variety of issues. It is closely linked to RE and provides a good vehicle for speaking and listening. In the lesson seen, time was used well to enable pupils to reflect on the first two weeks of term and how people could be made welcome. They listened well to one another and all took part.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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