

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY LOWER SCHOOL

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109436

Headteacher: Miss J Edwards

Lead inspector: Mr T Gill

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 March 2004

Inspection number: 257237

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 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	135
School address:	Greyfriars Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK40 1JD
Telephone number:	01234 261768
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Crowley
Date of previous inspection:	30 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Priory Lower School is a small, multi-cultural school in the centre of Bedford. There are 61 boys and 49 girls in the main school and 25 children attend the Nursery part time. Currently about 41 per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and this is higher than most other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 25 per cent, is above what is usually found. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, four per cent, is well above national figures. English is not the mother tongue for over 80 per cent of the children. Most of the children are from Bangladeshi families. Their home language is Sylheti, a dialect of Bengali, which has no written form. There are also children from Pakistan, countries in Africa and Europe speaking French, Dutch, Arabic, Portuguese, Urdu and Punjabi. Two children are refugees. Mobility of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is high in Year 4, where 32 per cent of the pupils did not start in the first year group of the school. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are worse than elsewhere. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is well below average. The school won an Investors in People award in 2001. It is also part of the local Education Action Zone.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21398	Mr T R Gill	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Music
9619	Mr R E Miller	Lay inspector	
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
19774	Mrs M D Docherty	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The pupils' achievement is good because of the generally good, challenging teaching. Children enter with well below average standards, and by Year 4 standards are average in science, close to the national average in mathematics and below average in English. The leadership of the headteacher is good. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the leadership and management of the headteacher and the governors are good;
- the provision in the Nursery and Reception class is very good and that leads to the children having a good start;
- the lessons in the Nursery and Reception class are consistently good and are enhanced by excellent assessment information;
- the support for pupils in their mother tongue is very good;
- the achievement of pupils with special educational is good because of the good support they receive from the specialist teacher and the teaching assistants;
- standards in art and design are very good;
- the school provides very good levels of care, welfare, health and safety, support, advice and guidance for pupils;
- despite the pupils' good achievement and the good teaching they receive, standards are below average in English and mathematics throughout the school and in science by the end of Year 2; the monitoring and recording of bi-lingual pupils' acquisition of the English language are not thorough enough in Years 1 to 4;
- attendance is unsatisfactory.

The school has made a very good improvement since the last inspection. It has dealt with the extensive list of issues that were identified in the last report. The provision for care, support and guidance is very good. Leadership and management are good; standards in information and communication technology are now satisfactory and good assessment procedures are generally in place across the school and are excellent in the Nursery and Reception class. There are sufficient, good, support staff in the Nursery and planning and organisation are very good. Resources are satisfactory, and there is good planning in religious education, design and technology and geography. The curriculum is good and enriched by a very good range of visits and extra-curricular activities. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Good improvements have been made in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	E*	E	E*	E
writing	E*	E	E*	E*
mathematics	E*	E	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average;

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

The pupils' achievement is good overall. The E* in the table indicates the results were very low. However, the comparison with similar schools does not take account of the number of the pupils whose first language is not English. The high number of pupils with little or no English presents the school with many barriers to raising standards consistently in line with the national averages by the

end of Year 2. The standards of the children on entry to the Nursery are well below those expected for their age and some are very low. Despite consistently good teaching, the majority of children will not have attained the early learning goals when they start in Year 1. The good achievement of the current Year 2 pupils means that, although standards are below average, the proportion of the pupils approaching the required standards has improved. Where subjects rely less on the written word, standards are generally better and achievement is good and sometimes very good. In Years 3 and 4, achievement continues to be good; standards are in line with expectations in science but below expectations in English and mathematics. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. The achievement of the bi-lingual pupils and the gifted and talented pupils is good. **Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** The pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their work are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory but punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided for the pupils is good overall. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and Reception class where the pupils' good learning helps them to achieve well and starts to narrow the gap between their standards and those of similarly aged pupils. Throughout the rest of the school teaching and learning are generally good. Very good support from mother tongue speakers helps all the pupils to be fully involved in their work and achieve well. Relationships between the pupils and staff are very good across the school and this helps to create an atmosphere where good learning can take place. Assessment information is excellent in the Nursery and Reception class and thorough in the rest of the school. It is used effectively to set targets and plan lessons that engage and challenge the pupils. However, the monitoring and recording of bi-lingual pupils' acquisition of English language is not thorough enough in Years 1 to 4. As a consequence, the teachers lack the information to provide better targeted support for some of the pupils. The partnership with other schools, particularly those in the Education Action Zone, is very good and is having a good effect on teaching and learning. The very good range of visits and after-school clubs makes a significant contribution to the pupils' achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a very good strategic view for the school's development and has given subject leaders a greater role in improving and influencing their subjects. This is a very inclusive¹ school and the school works hard to meet the needs of all its pupils. Good assessment and very good monitoring procedures enable the headteacher, the staff and the governors to have a very clear picture of how the different groups of pupils are achieving and if their achievement is good enough. The school is organised to ensure that support is given where it is needed to help pupils to do their best. The contribution of the governing body is generally good and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They feel well informed and that the school supports them in helping their children at home. The pupils generally enjoy being at school, feel safe, and are confident that staff will deal with any problems they have promptly. Members of the school council feel they are listened to and that they have influence on what goes on in the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 and in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4;
- improve the monitoring and recording of bi-lingual pupils' acquisition of English language in Years 1 to 4 to raise the achievement of some pupils; and

¹ Inclusive refers to the arrangements the school makes to meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

- continue to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement across the school is good. Standards by the end of the Foundation Stage are well below average in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world; they are below average in communication, language and literacy and, average in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are below average in English, and science and well below average in mathematics. In Year 4, standards are below average in English, close to the average in mathematics and average in science. In Years 1 to 4, standards are average in design and technology, history, information and communication technology, gymnastics and religious education. Standards in art and design are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are not good enough in Year 2 and they are not good enough in English and mathematics in Year 4.
- Standards attained by pupils who regularly attend school are generally much better than those who do not.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

1. When children enter the Foundation Stage their attainment is well below average and some is very low. The teaching is consistently good and the pupils have many opportunities to talk together in English and Sylheti. As a result their achievement is good. However, despite this, the majority of children's knowledge, understanding and skills will be below what is expected for pupils of their age when they start Year 1.
2. In the table below, which shows the school's results in the Year 2 national tests for 2003, the standards at the end of Year 2 were very low in reading, writing and mathematics. There was no clear pattern in the difference between what the boys and girls achieved and there has not been for the last three years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.6 (13.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.3 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	11.5 (13.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school's data from tracking those pupils who had been in the school from the very start and had not been on extended holidays shows a more favourable picture. This group of eight pupils, called the standard group, contained two pupils with statements of special educational need. The table below shows that in reading, standards were average overall for this group, but below average for the higher level, level 3. In writing, standards were average overall and well above average for the higher level, level 3. In mathematics, standards were well below average

overall and below average for pupils attaining the higher level, level 3. Levels shown as 2B are higher than level 2 and shows that the number of pupils achieving these was well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. This data does not contradict the official data shown above, which is an accurate picture of the overall attainment. It does, however, underline why the school is so concerned to ensure regular attendance and the benefits it brings, particularly with the high number of the pupils who enter the school with little or no understanding of English.

Y2 in 2003	Reading		Writing		Mathematics	
	Whole cohort	Standard group	Whole cohort	Standard group	Whole cohort	Standard group
L2 and above %	E	C	E*	C	E*	E
L2B and above %	D	A	E	B	E*	B
L3 %	D	D	B	A	E	D

- Standards in Year 4, are better than at the end of Year 2, but are still not good enough in English and mathematics. The achievement in English for bilingual pupils and those learning with English as an additional language is good given the very low starting point of most of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the achievements of the different ethnic groups. By Year 4, the pupils are able to read texts but some are unable to fully understand what the words mean and this hinders their learning and achievement. However, the higher-attaining pupils reach the expected standard. Where subjects rely less on the written word, standards are generally better and achievement is good and sometimes very good.
- The pupils with special educational needs receive good help to develop their literacy, mathematical and scientific skills. Their achievement is good because of the good support they receive from the specialist teacher and the teaching assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good procedures are starting to improve attendance.
- The pupils' very good relationships and racial harmony are strengths.
- The pupils are developing a very good awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs.

Commentary

- Attendance is well below the national average. The main reasons for absences are sickness, medical appointments and holidays taken during term-time. These absences are having a negative impact on the achievement of those pupils concerned.
- The school has implemented very rigorous monitoring procedures, including first-day follow up calls for all unexplained absences. There are very close links with the education welfare service and this is beginning to have a positive effect on attendance rates and punctuality, which are showing significant signs of improvement compared to two years ago.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.0

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1

National data	5.4
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National data	0.4
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

8. The pupils of all ages show good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is reflected in their very good punctuality, enjoyment of lessons and their participation in the many extra-curricular activities.
9. The relationships enjoyed by the pupils with one another are a strength of the school. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and when they do occur the school is quick to deal with them effectively. The very good personal, social and health education programme is used to reinforce the positive messages about good behaviour and correct conduct, which the pupils respond to well. The result is a very racially harmonious school community where pupils play and work together co-operatively. They show respect for people, living things, property and the environment. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year.
10. The pupils are proud of their own background and beliefs. They are developing a very good awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs through the teaching of religious education and assemblies. They respect the views and beliefs of others and understand that this is important. They understand the importance of religious festivals and traditions and this is effectively promoted by the celebration of festivals connected with the faiths of pupils at the school. The school also makes a point of celebrating the Chinese New Year, because of the rich opportunities this provides, and because there are no Chinese pupils at the school, so pupils consider a festival new to them all. Children in the Nursery and Reception class are taught to listen to one another and they have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are an improvement since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education this school provides for its pupils is **good** overall. The pupils achieve well because of the good standard of teaching and good support they receive. Assessment information is thorough and used effectively to set individual targets and plan lessons that engage and challenge the pupils. Care, guidance and support are very good. The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good and assessment is excellent.
- The management and organisation of lessons and well-established routines are good.
- The use of bi-lingual assistants to support pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is very good.
- Assessment and its use are generally good in Years 1 to 4 but there is not enough monitoring and recording of bilingual pupils' acquisition of English language.
- The pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and show mutual respect.
- In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teaching was not well matched to the pupils' previous learning and understanding.

Commentary

11. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception class is consistently good and occasionally very good. There is a very good balance between adult-led activities and activities selected by the children. The children learn effectively because they have a good range of interesting and related experiences both inside and outside. Planning is very detailed and ensures that the children's learning needs are well catered for. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is excellent; very detailed records are kept of all learning areas, particularly the children's acquisition and understanding of English, and this helps to match very challenging work for all the children in systematic, small steps to ensure that their learning is good. The gathering of this very high quality information is not continued in the rest of the school and as a result it is not so easy for the staff to identify potential underachievement or pinpoint all learning needs.
12. Overall, classrooms are well organised and well-established routines are understood and followed by the pupils, which helps effective learning to occur. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very good and the mutual respect that is shown helps to build an atmosphere conducive to good learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is very securely based on the guidance provided by the literacy and numeracy strategies. Lessons are generally well managed and pupils know what to do. What the pupils are to learn is usually displayed and this helps to ensure there is appropriate consistency in pupils' learning day-by-day. It focuses their attention, particularly when the learning objectives and key words on the board are explained and referred to during the rest of the lesson. However, this good practice is not consistently used across the school and is one of the main differences between satisfactory and good lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	2 (7%)	16 (53%)	11 (37%)	1 (3%)	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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. In the last inspection 13 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory this time, a significant improvement. In the unsatisfactory lesson, what some of the pupils were expected to do was too difficult. They lacked an understanding of what some of the words meant in the text they had to read, such as 'empire', and were not able to take a full part in the lesson. Their behaviour deteriorated because they were not fully involved.
14. There has been a very good improvement in assessment since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are generally good in Years 1 to 4, and there are some interesting ways of recording progress, one of which is to photograph the pupils as they are engaged on a project and then attach notes on how the pupil responded to the task.
15. Well-written individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs provide appropriate steps towards achievable targets. Work is carefully prepared by the teachers to match needs, ensuring that the teaching assistants know exactly how to support the pupils in lessons so that learning is as effective as possible. The very good relationships between these pupils and the support staff, who show great patience, give these pupils confidence to succeed and this aids their learning. During whole-class sessions, teachers fully include these pupils by, for example, giving a pupil who answers questions haltingly, additional time and praise for his efforts.

The curriculum

The quality and range of the curriculum are good. A broad range of curricular opportunities meet pupils' needs and they achieve well. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. The overall accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and rich and meets all statutory requirements.
- The programme for art and design is very good.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and community links enriches the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively.

Commentary

16. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, in that all aspects of both information and communication technology and design and technology are now successfully covered. The curriculum for children under the age of five offers a wide range of learning opportunities and is planned very well to national guidance. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to the pupils' needs. The school has a good policy, which fully meets the Code of Practice. The school identifies the needs of pupils at an early stage. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets for progress.
17. The school has schemes of work for each subject in the National Curriculum. These are mostly based on nationally recognised material and adapted to give them more relevance to the pupils. The schemes have the advantage of encouraging a uniform approach to the teaching of a subject throughout the school, ensuring that there is full coverage of a subject and that pupils' skills are developed systematically. Because of the mixed aged classes, topics are covered on a two-year cycle so that pupils do not repeat work and they cover the whole curriculum. This does mean that teachers need to plan very carefully to meet the needs of the pupils with a wide range of abilities in each class. To ease this problem, literacy, numeracy and, to a lesser extent, information and communication technology and religious education, are taught to single age groups. The curriculum is reviewed regularly, in sessions involving the whole teaching staff, so that problems can be identified and rectified. The school is not afraid to adopt an innovative approach when it feels this is helpful to the learning of the pupils. So, for example, design and technology is often taught in whole-day sessions so that pupils have an extended, continuous opportunity to tackle a task and the school can concentrate its resources, as well as bringing in outside, expert help, such as consultant engineers.
18. The programme for art and design is very strong, involving regular visits to a local art gallery and the National Gallery. These visits will then often be followed by further trips to enlarge on themes followed at the galleries, for example, to Kew Gardens to look more closely at plants. As a consequence of this provision, standards in art are well above average. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visiting speakers including artists, poets, story-tellers, musicians and representatives of the University of the First Age.
19. Considering the size of the school, it offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These directly support the curriculum and, because they are open to younger pupils, which is not the case in most schools, they are well supported.
20. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good. The school has a strong, detailed programme of work, which is supplemented by special events like health awareness days. The pupils have regular opportunities to speak on a range of issues in special sessions without interruption. The school council is a serious venture, and such matters as the attributes pupils would like to see in the next headteacher are discussed. A visit is planned from the local Member of Parliament. Educational visits, including an overnight

camping expedition for pupils in Year 4, provide useful opportunities for pupils to mix together in the wider community. The sex and relationships education policy does need updating.

21. Although the number of staff is small, the expertise they have is sufficient to offer a rich and full curriculum. There has been a very good improvement in the provision of support staff. Teaching assistants play a full part in the education of the pupils, particularly in the introduction of younger pupils to the English language. They also play a part in helping to give the pupils a sense of identity through running a popular extra-curricular club for the learning of Bengali.
22. There has been a satisfactory improvement in resources for the humanities. This was a key issue of the last inspection. As well as an increase in resources and artefacts, the regular visits to the local museum and art gallery have enriched the curriculum in history and art and design in particular. The accommodation is adequate. There are good play areas for the under fives. The staff have gone to some trouble to ensure the accommodation is attractive and welcoming. The classrooms are quite small and the hall is barely large enough for physical education lessons for older pupils. At the moment, the building will not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good levels of care and attention to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Provision of support, advice and guidance for the pupils is very good. There is very good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very effective procedures in place to ensure the pupils work and play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- Pupils have access to well-informed support and guidance.
- The school is very active in seeking the views of the pupils on school improvement.
- There are no significant weaknesses in this aspect of school life.

Commentary

23. Priory Lower School is a very caring place, where the pupils feel safe and secure. The parents agree that their children like school and that they are treated fairly. There is a suitable policy for health and safety and staff carry out risk assessments, including those for school trips. The site agent is very well involved in dealing with day-to-day hazards identified by staff. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals and there are a number of personnel trained in first aid on duty each day. The site is clean and well maintained and healthy eating is promoted at lunchtimes through the school lunches provided. Child protection procedures are in place and the designated teacher has received recent training. There are close links with outside agencies.
24. The pupils say that they have a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school. The staff know the pupils very well and have built up very good relationships with them. They have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' achievements and development. The pupils willingly approach staff for help and receive consistent advice, support and guidance. Those younger children in the Reception class and Nursery, and their families, are supported very well by the very effective induction² procedures that take place. The ability of parents to borrow books and toys from the school is particularly valued. The parents agree that there are good arrangements for their child to settle in when they start at the school. The pupils with special

² Induction refers to the arrangements made by the school to receive new pupils and help them settle into school routines.

educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are supported well, particularly by staff that speak in their mother tongue.

25. The school actively encourages the pupils' views both in informal and formal ways. There is a school council that considers matters as diverse as new playground equipment and the appointment of new staff to the school. This contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils have been instrumental in drawing up the school's code of conduct.
26. Since the last inspection there has been a very good improvement in the provision of care, support and guidance that pupils receive. This is now based on effective assessment procedures which monitor both their academic and personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the local community and **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information given to parents about the school and about pupils' standards and progress is very good.
- The contribution made by some of the parents to their children's learning at home is unsatisfactory.
- Educational links with other schools are very good and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' achievement.

Commentary

27. The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They say teaching is good and agree that their children are making good progress. A small minority considers that their child is sometimes bullied or harassed in school. There was no evidence of bullying taking place during the inspection and behaviour was found to be good and an improvement since the previous inspection. A great majority of parents agree that the school explains how they can help their child at home and provides appropriate homework. However, the school rightly recognises this as an area for continued development. There remain a number of parents whose contribution to their child's learning at home is unsatisfactory. There are a few parents now helping in school, listening to children read and assisting with cookery and sewing activities. The school has worked hard to draw in those parents who may find it difficult to approach school. This is an improvement on the previous inspection and makes a valuable contribution to children's progress.
28. The information provided for parents is very good and an improvement since the last inspection. Translations are provided of school letters and documents if a parent feels it is necessary. There is a comprehensive and very well produced school prospectus and an annual report from the governors. Both these documents meet statutory requirements and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A weekly school newsletter keeps parents and carers very well informed about school events. It also gives the results of any questionnaires that have been circulated seeking parents' views. The annual academic reports are very informative and helpful to parents. They clearly state what a child knows, understands, and can do and also what needs to be done to improve in a particular subject. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns or complaints that they might have.
29. Links with other schools and colleges are very good and visits to them offer opportunities to extend pupils' learning, a particular example being a visit to see a Russian cosmonaut. Student teachers regularly come into school for teaching practice and pupils from a nearby secondary school attend for work experience. Children from Priory Lower attend a local college to learn

dance. The school links with 18 others as part of the Bedford Education Action Zone to discuss the teaching of English and share best practice. Year 5 teachers, from the Middle School visit Priory to observe Year 4, lessons taking place. All of these activities make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement. The links the school has with the local community are good and an improvement since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a very good strategic view for the school's development. She has put good structures into place to give subject leaders a greater stake in improving their subjects. The contribution of the governing body is generally good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's agenda for improvement is well focused on raising standards; she is very clear on what needs to be done and how this can be achieved.
- The school is committed to inclusion and puts its commitment fully into practice.
- There are good assessment and very good monitoring procedures.
- The co-ordinators provide good leadership.
- The governors play a supportive role in the development of the school.

Commentary

30. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Firm and decisive leadership and management are evident in the way she has brought about the very good improvement in the school since the last inspection, addressing the extensive list of key issues well and making this an effective school.
31. Management is good. All members of staff are clear about their roles and discharge their responsibilities with a good degree of professionalism. Arrangements for performance management are good and well managed and, individual performance objectives are linked to school priorities. The school improvement plan is a very good and useful document and is well focussed on raising attainment.
32. This is a very inclusive school and the school works hard to meet the needs of all the pupils. It is organised to ensure that support is given where it is needed to help the pupils to do their best. This is clearly demonstrated by the way the school provides the pupils with good support in their mother tongue. All pupils are equally valued and their achievements celebrated, whatever their ability, helping them to build their confidence and aid their learning.
33. A very good improvement since the last inspection is the good assessment and very good monitoring procedures that enable the headteacher, staff and governors to have a very clear picture of how the different groups of pupils are achieving and if their achievement is good enough. Where action is required, it is taken. However, the systematic monitoring of the bi-lingual pupils' acquisition of language skills in English is not thorough enough in Years 1-4.
34. Since the last inspection, the leadership provided by subject co-ordinators has improved significantly as they have been given the necessary training and encouragement to take on greater responsibility. Co-ordination of subjects is generally good and co-ordination of the special educational needs provision is strong and effective. The school works closely with additional staff to review and evaluate targeted pupils' progress to ensure they achieve the standards they are capable of.
35. The governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They have a good cross-section of talent to draw on. They have a good understanding of the strengths of their school and the areas that can be further improved. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities, an

improvement since the last inspection. The governors regularly monitor the implementation of the school's good race relations policy to ensure it is being followed rigorously. Procedures to achieve best value are systematic and good. Financial management is prudent. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	44,405	Balance from previous year	21,657
Total expenditure	440,856	Balance carried forward to the next	7,549
Expenditure per pupil	3,424		

36. The high number of pupils that enter the school with little or no English presents the school with many barriers to raising standards consistently in line with the national averages by the end of Year 2, despite the generally good teaching and the good achievement of most of the pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good as a result of the very good response the school made to the findings of the previous inspection. Many of the children starting in the Nursery have little or no understanding of English or the way of life in this country. Consequently, nearly all the pupils are well below the standards expected for their age and some are very low. The very good support from the bi-lingual staff, however, enables the children to settle in well. The teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes very good and, as a result, the children's achievement, including those with special educational needs, is good. Due to the very good planning, all the areas of learning are developed effectively alongside each other. There is a very good balance between adult-led activities and activities selected by the children. As a result, the activities the children are given provide them with a good variety of interesting and related experiences. Assessment is excellent; very detailed records are kept of all learning areas, particularly the children's acquisition and understanding of English, and this helps to match very challenging work for all the children in systematic, small steps. The provision is well led and managed by the Foundation Stage leader who has created a very good, successful team. Liaison between the Nursery and Reception class is very good. All the adults are good role models. Relationships between the staff, children and parents are very good. Consequently, the children are confident and this helps their learning and is reflected in their good achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction arrangements ensure that the children settle quickly into the Nursery and build up very good, trusting relationships with the staff and the other children.
- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and challenging expectations set by the staff.

Commentary

38. Achievement is very good and nearly all the children are attaining in line with their ability. Most of the children are in line to meet the expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. The skills of the bi-lingual speakers enable the Nursery staff to quickly establish very good working relationship with the families. This helps the parents and carers to better support their children. It also leads to a good start to the children's learning and helps to develop the children's very good relationships with the members of staff. As a result, the children settle in quickly to the routines of the Nursery, learning to take turns, co-operate and share equipment. The good teamwork of the staff creates an environment that is calm and challenging, another of the reasons why the children's achievement is very good. Carefully planned and well-focused activities, very well matched the children's needs, hold the children's interest, encourage their independence and create a good learning environment that meets the needs of all the children. They respond well and their good attitudes, behaviour and relationships promote very good learning, enabling them to become increasingly independent users of the classroom and the outdoor area. The strong emphasis on inclusion ensures equality of access to the curriculum for all children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high priority is given to developing the children's language skills.
- The children's learning is enhanced by the support they receive from the bi-lingual staff.

Commentary

39. Achievement is good. From a very low starting point, the children reach standards which are below those expected for their age, and the large majority of them will not have met the national goals for this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. The members of staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills and their understanding of the meaning of words. The children's learning is enhanced significantly by the bi-lingual speakers who help the children to understand what words and sentences mean, such as 'Where are you putting the shampoo?' by using the child's mother tongue as well as English. Equally good support is given when a story is being read, as nearly three-quarters of the children need some support in their mother tongue in order to be able to understand it. When teaching words such as 'in front of' or 'behind', the actual placing of objects by the children reinforces their understanding of the meaning. In the Reception class the children are beginning to develop a recognition of common words such as 'had' and 'my' and, when sharing a "big book", they are encouraged to look for the words they know and say what they are, thereby improving their word recognition skills. The higher-attaining pupils achieve well. Outdoor play involving the "Nursery garage" provides a rich source of language and literacy development with the children being encouraged to use words like 'steering'. Through making out bills for services, the children are starting to discover writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff promote the children's mathematical understanding well.
- Teachers ensure that the children have a very good range of activities to enable them to become familiar with numbers and to learn to count.

Commentary

40. Achievement is good. Standards are well below what they should be and the large majority will not have met the expectations of this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. Very good detailed records of what the children can do and know enable the staff to promote the children's mathematical understanding well. As with all the areas of learning, a record of what the children know is placed near the activity table. This enables staff to focus clearly on what the next step is in the child's learning and whether language support is needed. This enables the children to achieve well. A wide range of practical activities help the children to develop their counting skills and read numbers. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce the children's learning; for example, by counting the wheels on the play cars and getting the children to park their car in a certain numbered parking space.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good variety of activities are used to help develop children's understanding.

Commentary

41. Achievement is good. Standards are well below what they should be and the majority will not have met the expectations of this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. A good variety of visits, such as a visit to a local garage, help the children to develop their understanding of the world they live in and gives them experiences they can use when role-playing as a mechanic. Special occasions, such as celebrating birthdays, help the children to learn about customs they are unfamiliar with. By asking children what the class did yesterday and telling them what they are doing today, the children are beginning to get an appreciation of the past and present. In the Reception class, the children are developing their computer skills satisfactorily by controlling a mouse as they draw their imaginary plant. At the same time, very good questioning from the learning assistant encourages the children to describe in some detail what they are trying to do. They are also developing a satisfactory understanding of the things that are needed to help plants to grow and are recognising signs of growth.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weakness

- The outdoor areas have made a very effective addition to the resources.
- Through role play the children are learning about those things that contribute toward keeping healthy.
- There is a good range of activities to develop the children's dexterity.

Commentary

42. Achievement is very good and nearly all the children are attaining in line with their ability. Most of the children are on course to meet the national goals for this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. The outdoor areas have provided the school with a valuable facility in which children can work and play safely while extending their understanding of how they can control and use their bodies. They have very good, planned opportunities to use large wheeled toys to develop their co-ordination. The children were learning to control their bodies as they travelled round a circuit going through hoops and balancing on benches. While bathing the dolls, the staff start to develop the children's understanding of the need to wash and clean their teeth regularly as part of keeping healthy. This is reinforced in the play corner where a bathroom is set up with a selection of toiletries. Throughout all the areas of learning, very good opportunities are planned that enable the children to develop good manipulative skills and dexterity, through cutting, making and building using an appropriate variety of construction materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning.
- The children achieve very well because of the good teaching and the high, challenging expectations set by the staff.

Commentary

43. Achievement is very good and most of the pupils are working to their potential. Many of the children are on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning, though a minority will not, by the end of the Reception year. In both the Nursery and the Reception class, the children enjoy singing action songs and making music. Good teaching ensures the children handle the instruments correctly and are learning how to make loud and quiet sounds. Use of the mother tongue ensures all pupils understand and are fully involved. In the Reception class, a girl showed the very good learning that had taken place, when she explained very carefully to another child how to hold and strike the bells to make a short and a long sound. Very good opportunities are provided to develop imaginative role-play and the members of staff, through skilful questions, encourage the children to develop their imaginative play and language skills. For example, 'the garage owner' was encouraged to go into a lot of detail about the services he offered, and what he thought was wrong with the car, when prompted by a question about what he had seen when the class had visited the garage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's focus on improving standards is having a good effect on achievement.
- There is not enough monitoring and recording of bi-lingual pupils' acquisition of English language to identify possible under-achievement and aid teachers' planning.
- Teaching is generally good, but varies between classes.
- Bi-lingual pupils in Years 3 and 4 need more support.
- Subject leadership is good.

Commentary

44. Standards have improved since the last inspection but remain below expected levels at Years 2 and 4. Standards in the 2003 tests in Year 2, were well below the national average, with some marked differences between reading and writing. In reading, only 57 per cent achieved the national level and only 11 per cent exceeded it. In writing, only 43 per cent of pupils attained the expected level and only 4 per cent exceeded it, resulting in well below average standards overall. These results indicate a drop in performance from the previous year and a trend of improvement well below the national picture.
45. Current standards in reading and writing have improved. The difference between current standards and the lower 2003 results partly reflects variation in the number of the pupils with potential to achieve the nationally expected levels, the fact they had a full year in the Reception

class, but also the effectiveness of the strategies the school has adopted, including generally good assessment procedures.

46. A high percentage of pupils, including those with special educational need and English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of the generally good teaching and good support they receive from well briefed teaching assistants. However, the distinction between the specific needs of bi-lingual pupils and those with special educational need are not always made clear in the school's documentation. Records do not include enough precise information on the level of understanding of the English language of each pupil. As a consequence, the teachers lack the information to provide better, targeted support; for example, to help pupils understand the general flow of a text or to explain particular vocabulary or literary phrases which might make a text puzzling or inaccessible for some pupils. The data also shows that those pupils who have not been on extended holidays make much better progress than those who have. Higher-attaining pupils make very good progress from a low starting point, though they achieve only average standards against national expectation and very few exceed this level. Some good opportunities are provided to allow accelerated learning in each year group, for example by grouping pupils by ability for "guided reading".
47. The teachers' warm relationships and encouraging approach motivate the pupils and help them to rise to the challenge of new learning. When work is planned over several lessons, the teachers review previous learning carefully. They do this by using questioning well to establish a common level of understanding before introducing the new work. The teachers use the literacy strategy's teaching framework well to guide planning, with additional support for lower attaining and special educational needs pupils provided by teaching assistants. Reading and writing development is supported well by national initiatives such as "guided reading" and "guided writing", which help pupils build up skills in understanding meaning in reading and to structure sentences and fuller pieces of writing more effectively. This work is supported well by teaching in small groups with well trained staff. In most lessons, good opportunities are provided for the pupils to talk together about the key issues of the lesson. In a few lessons, however, teaching did not sufficiently recognise the linguistic demands of particular tasks and the difficulties the work posed for some pupils. For example, in one class, the pupils tackled the range of sounds produced by a common letter combination "-ough". The teacher produced word lists like "plough", "bough", "trough" and "cough" to help them use the correct spelling options when writing words, which look the same but sound different. This work was presented without any pictures to help pupils understand the meaning when writing.
48. In the good lessons, the teaching is well matched to the needs of the different learners and their understanding of the English language. In satisfactory lessons, the level of work, particularly that designed to develop writing skills, does not always closely match the pupils' understanding of the English language. The pupils work on the same task and some pupils appear to have limited knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary needed to bring appropriate structure to their writing. Individual targets are used effectively to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their writing. Marking is good and takes account of the learning objective and individual targets. The evaluation of pupils' work does not focus enough on the particular influence of their English language acquisition or experience.
49. A significant percentage of pupils in Years 3 and 4, are fully bi-lingual and speak English with reasonable fluency, often using English as their main language. These pupils do not always get enough support to understand the key vocabulary, idiomatic use, structure and implied meaning of unfamiliar texts. Some ideas presented in reading are outside their cultural experience and need explanation, for example the assembly story of "Persephone and Demeter".
50. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Appropriate emphasis has been placed on writing development and spelling, and good improvements are evident since the last inspection, where

these areas were identified as issues. End-of-year test results are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses and the data used to identify targets to raise standards. Information and communication technology resources were not routinely used in lessons, which, when used well, engage pupils' interest and allow teachers to discuss particular features of the text they are studying.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Lessons provide a good range of speaking and listening opportunities. The school actively supports pupils' bi-lingualism and the pupils are given good opportunities to discuss ideas in both English and Sylheti before feeding back to the whole class. This enables less experienced English as an additional language and special educational needs pupils to rehearse ideas and to practise the English language before feeding back to the class or writing their ideas into their books. The pupils have good opportunities to practise their literacy skills across the curriculum, for example in science to write up their investigations in the appropriate and conventional style.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are well below average but those of the pupils in Year 4 are only just below average.
- The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Assessment arrangements are very good.

Commentary

52. The results of national tests in mathematics in 2003, showed the standards of the pupils in Year 2, to be very low when compared to the average and that this follows a trend of well below average standards in recent years. Observations confirm that the standards of the pupils at present in Year 2 are well below average but also indicate that the standards of pupils in Year 4 are better and, although still just below, are approaching average. To a certain extent, this improvement can be linked to the pupils' improved grasp of English but nevertheless achievement in mathematics is good. By the time they are in Year 4, higher-attaining pupils are reaching good levels in their learning in mathematics. They are, for example, able to find the area and perimeter of rectangles and use this information to deduce how it might be possible to find the area of a triangle. They do, however, still find difficulties in solving problems involving subtraction. The pupils with special educational needs, who receive good support from well-briefed teaching assistants in lessons, or are taught in small groups, also make good progress.
53. The achievement of these pupils is helped by the school's thorough assessment arrangements. These not only allow the school to assess accurately the progress of individual pupils but also of groups of pupils, for example, girls and boys or those pupils who speak English as their first language. The pupils' responses to test material are analysed so that areas of weakness in learning can be identified and this information is used to inform the planning of activities for pupils in lessons. Assessments show that the pupils in Years 3 – 4, progress at a rate better than the national average, and that the pupils who have been at the school since they were five, without having been on extended periods of absence, achieve better than others who have not.

54. Good achievement is also a result of good teaching. Learning is helped by teachers' good planning. The numeracy strategy has been thoroughly implemented and this has helped to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics throughout the school, that there is full coverage of the subject and that the pupils' skills are developed systematically. The teachers plan thoroughly, often including activities for pupils of different abilities and so helping the learning of all the pupils in the class. There is a good emphasis on getting the basics correct; for example, it is noticeable that very few pupils, even amongst the youngest, reverse digits or numbers. The pupils' learning is also helped by both the positive, encouraging manner adopted by teachers and their skilful use of questioning. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 1, working on their number bonds, the teacher challenged the pupils to extend their learning by asking them to explain how they did it. The pupils responded enthusiastically and were visibly delighted at the teacher's praise for their efforts. Teachers also help to focus the pupils' thinking on what they are trying to achieve by sharing the learning objectives of the lesson with them and, in the case of younger pupils, posting them in their workbooks. Sessions at the end of lessons are generally used well to help to review and consolidate the pupils' learning in the lesson, although occasionally teachers focus specifically on the activities of individuals and lose the attention of the rest of the group. Teachers' marking is good, they offer encouragement and, particularly for older pupils, suggestions on how they might improve and extend their learning. There are good examples of pupils correcting their work at the suggestions of the teachers.
55. The pupils use their learning in information and control technology to support their learning in mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, use a programmable toy to help them in their work on angles and turning. Computers are not extensively used to support work in the handling and display of data.
56. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. Because she has been able to directly monitor teaching and learning in mathematics, by working alongside teachers in lessons, the co-ordinator has a good overview of mathematics at the school. She has been able to improve her understanding of standards by scrutinising pupils' work and seeking expert advice, from outside agencies, on the most efficient and insightful way to do this. The very good assessment arrangements now provide a clear view of the standards at the school, as well as the progress of the individual pupils. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Links with science are good; for example, older pupils develop their ability to weigh and measure volumes in practical activities. Teachers and the pupils make good and extensive use of timelines in their history work. A good example in religious education involved Year 4 pupils using a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences between a Muslim and Jewish wedding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are satisfactory by Year 4.
- Teaching is good overall.
- There are not enough opportunities for the pupils to modify and plan their own experiments.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

58. Achievement across the school is good. The national tests in 2003 showed the standards of the pupils at the end of Year 2 were very low. Inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 are below average but that the standards of pupils in Year 4 are average. This difference in attainment is due to the pupils' improving grasp and understanding of English as they move through the school. The satisfactory standards are, in part, due to clear long and medium-term plans. The use of information and communication skills is becoming better established in science; in one lesson, the pupils used computers to find out information about rocks from a selected web-site. In Years 3 and 4, there are inconsistencies in standards and presentation, and in one class pupils do not sufficiently develop their investigational skills.
59. The assessment of pupils' work is good and helps to ensure good learning can take place because teachers are able to match work well to the pupils' learning needs. Lessons are well planned, there are well-established routines and good behaviour is expected and obtained. This creates a calm atmosphere in which learning can prosper. In a lesson in Year 4, good questioning helped pupils to discuss and understand the difference between reversible and irreversible changes. Also, good attention was paid to ensuring all the pupils, particularly those whose English was more limited, understood what they had to do. In a Year 2 lesson, the bilingual assistant, through use of the mother tongue, ensured the pupils understood the tasks they were being given. This helped the pupils to achieve well. The pupils with special educational needs are equally well supported and achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils make very good progress from a low starting point, though they achieve only average standards against national expectation and very few exceed this level. The teaching of investigational skills is satisfactory and pupils are given good opportunities to predict, draw conclusions, and to think about making tests fair. For example, in one lesson in Year 2, pupils thought carefully how they would make a fair test to find out how distance affects the sounds you hear. The pupils with limited literacy skills were encouraged to record their results in pictures so they could take a full part in the lesson. However, across the school, the experiments are too teacher-directed and the pupils are not given the opportunity to alter what they are doing or devise their own experiments.
60. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and monitors the subject well. Clear long-term and medium-term plans are in place to ensure good coverage in the mixed age classes. There has been a good improvement in science since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

61. It was not possible to make a judgement about provision as it was only possible to see one lesson in information and communication technology. However, by observing pupils use computers in literacy lessons and programmable machines in mathematics, by scrutinising the pupils' work and teachers' planning and through discussions with pupils, it is possible to say that the standards of the pupils aged seven and nine are broadly in line with those expected. By the time they are in Year 4, the pupils confidently save and retrieve their work and are able to manipulate text as they draft their writing. They use the Internet for research but do not, as yet, send messages electronically.
62. Standards have improved since the last inspection because of the considerable improvement in provision. The teachers' knowledge and confidence have been improved by the training they have received. The introduction of a nationally recognised programme of work and the extension of resources has meant a full coverage of the subject, including the control element missing at the time of the last inspection. It has also aided the systematic development of pupils' skills, a process that has also been helped by the introduction of good assessment procedures. These mean that the progress of both individuals and groups of pupils can be readily tracked.

63. Teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. The good subject knowledge of the teachers and the well-qualified support staff means that pupils get both good advice and a good level of adult help and this assists their learning. Slightly insecure class management meant that the pace of the lesson was not as brisk as it might be and there was consequently less time for learning in the lesson. In classes of younger pupils, their low literacy skills affect the rate of learning. For example, a Year 2 pupil, striving to save his work, was unable to do this independently because he could not read the word 'file'. Progress is being helped because children in the Reception class are introduced to the work for Year 1 pupils in the summer term and so they get a good start that helps to build their confidence and knowledge.
64. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are good. The co-ordinator is able to have a direct influence on the standards of the younger pupils by teaching both classes. The good assessment arrangements allow the co-ordinator to have a satisfactory overview of the pupils' progress and standards throughout the school. The school makes use of a bank of laptop computers. These are not sufficient for pupils to have one each in all sessions, which obviously reduces the time that pupils have for first-hand experience. The laptops do, however, allow a degree of flexibility and this means that the equivalent of an information and communication technology suite can be set up in more than one classroom. The relative inconvenience in printing work because of these arrangements means that there are relatively few examples of pupils' finished work displayed around the school. These would offer encouragement and interest to all pupils. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. Information and communication technology is used to support learning in other subjects. Older pupils use the Internet for research in history lessons on the Romans. The pupils in Year 3 support their learning of rotation and points of the compass by working with programmable devices. The relatively small number of personal computers in each classroom does reduce the opportunities for individual pupils to apply the skills they have been taught directly.

HUMANITIES

66. There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects in full. There has been a satisfactory improvement in resources for the humanities. This was a key issue of the last inspection. As well as an increase in artefacts, the regular visits to the local museum have increased the resources available for history in particular.
67. Work was sampled in geography, history and religious education as only one lesson was seen in both history and religious education. No lessons were seen in geography. A very good improvement has been made in one aspect of **geography** commented upon in the last inspection, namely the insufficient use made of the first-hand knowledge of the considerable number of pupils who spend time overseas. The pupils are now issued with disposable cameras when they go on an extended visit and return with a photographic and, in some cases, written record of their trip. These are put on display together with an attractive display that illustrates the countries of origin of pupils. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development and is a good celebration of the school's cultural diversity.
68. The teaching in the one **history** lesson was unsatisfactory because insecure class management and tasks not being well matched to the pupils' abilities led to a slow pace and unsatisfactory learning. The pupils' progress was also hampered by the fact that, although some pupils could read the words such as 'legionnaire' and 'empire', they had little idea about what they meant. However, the work in the books of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils shows good achievement, particularly by higher-attaining pupils, and that standards are average. A visit to a local museum stimulated some good work, with the written accounts supporting learning in literacy satisfactorily. Learning objectives are clearly shown on their books, giving the pupils a

clear idea of what they are trying to achieve, and so helping their progress. Teachers use interesting assessment procedures, one of which is to photograph the pupils as they are engaged on a project and then attach notes on how the pupil responded to the task. The books of pupils in Year 4, show that information and communication technology was used well to support their learning. Video recordings, CD Rom and the Internet are used in investigations into life in Britain at the time of World War 2. This range of resources is a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

69. There has been a good improvement in both standards and resources in **religious education** since the last inspection. Standards in Year 4 are at least in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Although the pupils are mostly Muslim, and therefore have a good knowledge of Islam, they also have a good understanding of Christianity. They know what parables are and what their significance is, as well as being able to recount examples. They have an understanding of the Church and some of its customs despite, in most cases, never having been to one. A good feature of the work in religious education at the school is the links and comparisons made between the various faiths. For example, Year 4 pupils study the part played by, and the symbolism of, food in different religions: the Seder Meal, Easter Eggs, Eid celebrations and Christingle. They make a good investigation of celebrations and consider similarities between important tenets of each religion, such as the Eightfold Path and the Five Pillars of Islam. The pupils in Year 2 compare and contrast stories from the Bible and the Qu'ran. The teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. The pupils looked at signs of spring as part of their work on reactions to the natural world. A good feature of the lesson was the way that the teacher's skilful questioning helped to extend and consolidate the pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects in full. In **art and design**, an examination of the very good range of work and the teachers' planning shows that standards are well above average and achievement is very good. The curriculum is well covered. Techniques and skills are developed in a systematic way and are used to help the pupils respond to a variety of stimuli. In Year 1, there are some very good water-colour paintings illustrating subjects like a sunset and a dancing girl. In Year 2, there were very good paintings of buildings around the school based on the work of Monet's depiction of places in London. Year 4 pupils produced very good art-work based on botanical illustrations. Their pictures showed very good attention to detail and were subtly shaded and coloured. Computers are being used satisfactorily to support art and design work. These standards represent a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are good.
71. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. An examination of work on display, the pupils' previous design plans and teachers' good planning shows that standards are average and that the curriculum is fully covered. The leadership and management of the subject are good. All the many issues raised in the previous report have been dealt with and the improvement since the last inspection is very good.
72. Only one lesson was observed in **music** in Year 4 though the whole school was heard singing in assembly. The singing was satisfactory. In the good lesson, the pupils were composing music to accompany a poem about Mowgli. Good teaching enabled the bi-lingual pupils to understand terms such as 'tempo'. Relationships were very good and the pupils co-operated well as they practised and refined their pieces. The Music Club enriches the curriculum where the pupils have the opportunity to sing and play instruments. The leadership and management of the subject are good.
73. In **physical education** only two lessons were seen and both of these were gymnastic lessons. Consequently it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Standards are average in gymnastics. The pupils with special educational needs progressed at the same rate as the

other pupils. The lessons contained a good level of physical activity and started well with appropriate and sustained warming-up activities. The pupils had a reasonable knowledge of the effects of exercise on the body, knowing that the heart beats faster during exercise and that this helps to increase the flow of oxygen around the body. The teachers made frequent use of pupil demonstration but did not sufficiently evaluate the demonstration to illustrate ways that movements could be improved or extended. Resources for physical education are generally good, a good improvement since the last inspection. However, the hall is barely adequate in size and the range of equipment stored around the edge reduces the effective working area. The pupils have only one lesson per week and this is not sufficient to maintain levels of fitness or consolidate learning. The programme of physical education is supported by concentrated, half termly, sessions at a local college, where pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in dance, gymnastics and games. Football groups, run outside school hours, offer tuition to a good number of pupils, although these tend to be almost exclusively boys.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has a high profile in the school.
- Citizenship development is an integral part of the provision.

Commentary

74. The pupils achieve well as a result of the good teaching and learning. Concern for pupils' personal and social education permeates all aspects of the work of the school and is linked effectively to religious education. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are actively promoted. There is a well-planned programme of topics that build on the work in a systematic way as the pupils move through the school ensuring good progress takes place. The pupils get on very well with adults and with each other and show tolerance and respect for views different from their own. They frequently work together in pairs or in groups of different sizes, ability or gender, in all subjects.
75. There is good promotion of health awareness. Younger pupils learn about the importance of exercise, a good diet and hygiene. They learn about growing and the changes it brings. They discuss physical well-being in physical education lessons.
76. Citizenship is promoted very well. A high priority is given to enabling the pupils to understand the customs of this country and those of countries further afield. There is an active school council, which enables pupils to be involved in considering developments and making suggestions for improvement. The pupils rightly feel that they have a voice and are listened to. The pupils have a number of responsibilities as monitors, and the pupils in each class carry out regular duties.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	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).