

INSPECTION REPORT

Rosary Roman Catholic Primary School

Hampstead, London

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100035

Headteacher: Ms I Gaffney

Lead inspector: Mr D Speakman

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 257352

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
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	353
School address:	238 Haverstock Hill Hampstead NW3 2AE
Telephone number:	020 7794 6292
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Morris
Date of previous inspection:	5 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serves the local area and one much wider than the immediate vicinity. Although the neighbourhood around the school is advantaged, some pupils come from areas of social deprivation further a field. This means that the school's intake is generally socio-economically average. The school is popular. Parents choose it for their children for a number of reasons, including its religious affiliation and caring ethos, the standards it achieves, the quality of behaviour and a number of them attended the school as children. Few pupils join or leave during the school year. About a third of the pupils are White – British with pupils coming from a very wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. About a fifth of the pupils speak English as an additional language, most of them being at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average and includes moderate and specific learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural problems; speech and communication and hearing disabilities. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is broadly average. Although the range of attainment on entry to the nursery covers a very wide range, most pupils enter the school with well below average attainment, particularly in their communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	Mr D Speakman	Lead inspector	Science, design and technology.
1305	Dr B Rance	Lay inspector	
15023	Mr A Houas	Team inspector	English, geography, history, English as an additional language
20003	Mrs S Metcalfe	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, personal, social and health education & citizenship, music, foundation stage
26961	Mr M Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, physical education, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school that provides a **very good quality of education** and gives **very good value for money**. Whilst most children enter the school with well below average levels of attainment, they progress very well because of the strong teaching, exciting high quality curriculum and very good care. Standards at the end of Year 6 have remained high. Pupils are very interested in school, achieve well and attain above average standards in English, well above average in mathematics and science and generally good standards in other subjects. Leadership and management are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There are no major weaknesses in this school.
- The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good and forms the basis of the school's drive for constant improvement.
- The governors make a good contribution to the school's development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Foundation Stage and good, with many very good features throughout the rest of the school.
- Assessment procedures are very good and excellent in the Foundation Stage. The information is used very well to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment have challenging work to do.
- Standards in English are above average and in mathematics and science are well above.
- Standards in art and design are well above average by the end of both Years 2 and 6.
- Standards in music, design and technology, history and information and communication technology are above average by the end of Year 6.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those with different capabilities, including higher attaining pupils achieve well. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum is of a very good quality and benefits from very good levels of enrichment via extra activities.
- As a result of very good provision for their personal development, pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their behaviour is very good.
- The school looks after its pupils very well and this reflects its ethos of high levels of care for all.
- Links with parents are very effective and the school has productive contact with other schools.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school had a successful inspection in 1998 and since that time high standards have been maintained in those subjects inspected fully. The quality of teaching and learning is still good. Now there is a greater proportion of very good and excellent teaching. It is now of very good quality in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is much improved both in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. **All key issues have been met fully and there are now no major issues for the school to address.**

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Pupils start Nursery with well below average attainment. Children in the Foundation Stage **achieve very well** and by the time they join Year 1, they have achieved most of the early learning goals, but standards in communication, language and literacy remain below expectations. By the end of Year 6 in English, standards are above average and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards in those other subjects inspected fully are above average and well above average in art and design. Pupils achieve well over their time at school because of the very good provision made for them.

Pupils' personal development is very good. This is supported through very **good provision** for their **spiritual, moral and social development and good cultural provision.** Pupils' **attitudes** towards school and learning **and behaviour** are **very good.** **Attendance** is **below the national average and unsatisfactory,** despite the school's very good attempts to improve it. **Punctuality** is **good** and the vast majority of pupils arrive to school in good time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

Teaching and learning are **good,** with **many very strong features.** It is **very good** for children in **the Foundation Stage.** Teachers use assessment data very well in their very good lesson planning to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment and with a wide range of learning needs are given work that is challenging and moves them on quickly. Pupils are managed very well and as a result of the teachers' clearly very high expectations of behaviour, pupils behave very well in class and around the school. All staff are fully aware of the importance the school places on the full inclusion of all pupils in all school activities. This is evident in their planning and the way in which lessons and other school activities are conducted and organised.

The **curriculum** is **very good.** This means that activities provided are appropriate and relevant to all pupils, all of whom are fully involved in all the school has to offer. The curriculum has a very good level of richness and this comes from a high level of participation in activities outside of school and interesting visits and visitors. Targeted provision for pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and for higher attaining pupils is very good. **All pupils receive very good levels of help, guidance and support** through very good monitoring of their personal and academic progress and attendance. The school's links with parents and the community are very effective and with other schools good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **very good.** The headteacher has a very clear vision of the needs of the school which is based in rigorous and reliable self-evaluation and analysis of assessment data. Plans for school improvement are very well thought out and highly effectively worked through. She is very effectively supported in this work by other staff with leadership responsibility and curriculum leaders. **The governors provide good levels of support** and contribute well to the work of the school. Together, the headteacher, staff and governors have developed **very good management systems** that are very effective in identifying the school needs and moving it forward at a good pace.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. No significant concerns were expressed by parents before the inspection. They appreciate their children's achievement, the care that the school takes of their children, the standards of behaviour and the general ethos of the school. They are happy with the information the school provides for them through frequent letters and regular newsletters. Parents feel able to approach the school at any time if they have any concerns. In the summer term, parents receive the annual reports on their children, but some expressed concern that they were not able to respond because it was not made available until the last day of the summer term this last year. This is a valid comment. A very small number of parents did, however, express some

concerns about the school providing information to parents, particularly about pupils' progress. The inspection team could find no reason to explain why parents should be concerned in this way.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no major areas for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' overall achievement is good. Achievement in **the Foundation Stage is very good**, and for pupils in **Years 1 to 6 it is good**. Standards in mathematics and science are well above average and above average in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. However, because of the well below attainment on entry to the nursery, particularly in communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional development, standards remain below expectations by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards in English remain below average at the end of Year 2, but are above average at the end of Year 6.
- In mathematics and science, standards by the end of Year 2 are above average and well above by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in art and design are well above average. In design and technology, history, information and communication technology and music, standards are better than nationally expected by the end of Year 6.
- All groups of pupils, regardless of gender, race or ability, achieve well throughout the school, because of very good provision. They achieve very well at the end of Key Stage 2.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result of very good teaching, an effective learning environment and very good attention to the learning of basic English and personal skills, children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. By the time they enter Year 1, the school's assessment records and inspection observations confirm that most are well on their way to achieving the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage, but remain below expectations in the key area of communication, language and literacy.
2. The limited English skills of a significant proportion of pupils in Years 1 and 2, impact upon their performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. However, the results have shown some improvement in 2003 and comparison with national data indicates average standards, as yet unconfirmed, in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. Comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal are better, with above average results in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Inspection evidence still shows that standards in English for the current Year 2 pupils are below average and above average in mathematics and science. All groups of pupils achieve well in all three core subjects. Pupils' achievement in art and design is very good and in design and technology, history and information and communication technology it is good.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (15.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.7 (15.3)	14.4 (14.3)

mathematics	15.5 (16.6)	16.5 (16.2)
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There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (29.9)	27 (27)
mathematics	28.5 (29)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.4 (30.2)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Once pupils have achieved sound levels of competence in English, they make more noticeable progress. High levels of attainment in the results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have been maintained in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in all subjects is well above average. This agrees with the inspection judgements in mathematics and science, where standards are judged to be well above average. Attainment in English is judged to be above average and the school predicts a lower proportion of pupils to achieve the higher Level 5 this year, but is confident they can increase the predicted proportion. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
4. Attainment in all aspects of English; speaking and listening, reading and in writing is above average. Standards in mathematics are supported by the school's setting arrangements where pupils are arranged into groups according to their prior attainment, enabling teachers to focus closely on pupils' learning needs. Standards of Literacy and numeracy in other subjects are again good. In science, there is an emphasis on practical investigation and developing learning skills as a learning method and this helps to ensure that what pupils learn is understood by them and therefore securely retained during the periods when science is not studied, and enabling them to attain standards that are well above average.
5. From a very early age, pupils are taught basic computer skills and become familiar with the keyboard, using the mouse and a good range of programs in different subjects. This secure start enables pupils to maintain good standards in information and communication technology, with signs of further improvement. Standards in information and communication technology in other subjects are also good. Attainment in music is above that nationally expected for pupils of this age. Very good quality teaching and range of musical experiences support the good progress that pupils make. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments and the school enables pupils to perform in order to consolidate their learning. Learning in art and design is good and with the advice and support of specialists, pupils attain high standards throughout the school.
6. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language, including refugees, achieve well. Those who are in the early stages of learning English are effectively targeted and receive intensive teaching in basic English skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of teachers' careful planning and the very good provision that the school makes for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good attitudes** to the school and concentrate very well. Their **behaviour is very good**. They have **good relationships** with teachers and with each other. Provision for pupils' **personal development is very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to work; they like their teachers and try hard to please them.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and about the school.
- There is very good development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in our culturally diverse society.
- There are very good procedures in place to support pupils whose behaviour of attitudes cause concern.
- Pupils demonstrate very good levels of willingness to take on responsibility about the school, including undertaking jobs within their classroom and in the playground.
- The school has developed good strategies to develop pupils' confidence and raise self-esteem, including rewards in assemblies and sharing skills in their classes. Very good strategies are in place to deal effectively with all forms of harassment.

Commentary

7. In the Foundation Stage, children's attitudes and values are very good with them showing a growing willingness and enthusiasm to work hard and achieve their best. They have very positive attitudes to their work and most are prepared to work hard. As the vast majority of teaching is of good or very good quality, children approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm, with positive relationships, behaving very well in both formal and less structured situations. They respond very well to all they are asked to do; they settle very quickly to new activities and when there is a change of activity. Children are keen to do well and enthusiastically participate in all that is planned for them to do.
8. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies and at break times for the majority of pupils is very good. A small number of pupils have individual education plans to help them develop effective self-control skills. There have been no exclusions from school. Pupils are well aware of what to do if anyone threatens or attempts to bully them and know the steps the school will take to protect them. There are pupils from many different minority ethnic communities and no one could remember any incidents of racial harassment occurring. Should an incident occur, the school has very good procedures in place and deals well with any such incidents carefully and thoughtfully. Moral development is strong. Pupils learn through their personal, social and health education work as well as in assemblies and class discussion, the difference between right and wrong and how to behave to others. This work is reinforced by the focus on pupils' social development. Pupils have the opportunity to undertake a range of jobs and responsibilities within their classrooms. They look after lonely pupils in the playground very well using the friendship bench and they welcome visitors to the school, opening doors and greeting them politely. Pupils have fun raising money for less privileged people around the world.

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	125	0	0
White – Irish	64	0	0
White – any other White background	38	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	25	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	12	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	18	0	0
Black or Black British – African	18	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	17	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	18	0	0

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

9. The school is very active in providing pupils with a curriculum that gives a range of spiritual and aesthetically pleasing opportunities, reflecting its Catholic focus. The growing of bulbs and seeds along with the sensory garden in the Foundation Stage gives pupils the opportunity to consider the wonder of the natural world. Teachers encourage pupils to look at a range of art from different cultures including American, African and Aboriginal; listen to music from different composers; read books by authors from different ethnic backgrounds and use what they see, hear and read in their own work well.
10. Pupils' personal development is well fostered by the clear personal, social and health education policy and scheme of work. Currently pupils are following a programme linked to keeping safe and in the summer, pupils took part in an anti-bullying day with a series of activities to reinforce playing together well in the playground. From this work came the playground squad, a group of pupils easily identified and trained to help negotiate through difficulties pupils experience while at play. This has also involved pupils making decisions on the purchase of playground games and training in a range of playground activities.
11. Pupils with English as an additional language mix well with other pupils from all backgrounds and are very keen to participate fully in activities and school events. They are highly motivated and benefit greatly from a supportive learning environment. This contributes significantly to the progress they make. Pupils with special educational needs develop positive attitudes towards one another, high self-esteem and confidence in relating to others because they are provided with opportunities through planned tasks that enable them to work confidently alongside other pupils.

Attendance

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance at school is below the national average, despite the school's very good procedures to encourage and monitor attendance.
 - The great majority of pupils arrive punctually.
12. In comparison with national statistics, pupils' attendance was below the average in the last academic year, and has improved since then. With the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer from the local education authority, the school monitors poor attendance and punctuality very closely. The procedures for promoting attendance are very good and there are very few instances of unauthorised absence because the school ensures that they have an explanation for pupils' absences. However, the attendance figures are adversely affected by a small number of families who take extended holidays overseas, particularly at the beginning of term. Nevertheless, the school's records show that the achievement of these pupils is not affected by a higher than average absence rate in Key Stage 2, but there is some impact at Key Stage 1. Although a large number of pupils depend on public transport to get to school and traffic is very heavy, very few pupils arrive late for school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.8	School data:	0.1
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. **Teaching and learning** in Years 1 to 6 are **good with many very good features** and **very good** for children in the **Foundation Stage**. All groups of pupils learn equally effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are fully included in all learning opportunities, regardless of ability, gender or background.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and this supports pupils' understanding in lessons.
- Planning is very good, based on very reliable assessment data, which effectively meets all pupils' needs, sets challenging work and enables good learning for all.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils; set challenging tasks and invariably expect high standards of behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are very effectively encouraged to do their best in all activities.
- Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and sustain pupils' interest and motivation.

Commentary

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and good for pupils in Years 1 to 6. This represents an improvement in quality since the school was last inspected in 1998. Although the quality of teaching and learning was good then, the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has shown a

significant improvement. This reflects the close attention given to its improvement by senior leaders, through highly effective monitoring and well thought out performance management procedures. The quality of learning is of the same standard, helped by the good attitudes and behaviour shown by the pupils. The particularly strong assessment systems help teachers ensure that pupils' work is targeted to their needs, and so they move on quickly in their learning. This applies to all groups of pupils; those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils at all levels of attainment. Children enter the Nursery with standards well below those expected for this age, particularly because of the significant proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their mother tongue. Pupils leave Year 6 with standards well above average, and this sort of improvement is typical of pupils in the school, largely due to the good quality of the teaching they receive.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	20 (48%)	15 (36%)	6 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in learning English, once they have gained competence in Basic English language and literacy skills. Very close attention is paid to these pupils in the nursery, where they are given the confidence to speak English in front of the group and therefore develop a secure basic knowledge and understanding of English and confidence from an early age. Good quality support is provided by the specialist teacher for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and results in their good quality learning. Learning activities are closely linked to the mainstream curriculum with good collaborative planning with class teachers. Lessons are effectively planned with clear emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills and opportunities for speaking and listening within a small group. Pupils are enabled to build English language skills proficiently and join in all learning opportunities fully in a good range of other subjects, such as science and mathematics, where specific vocabulary is introduced. Initial assessment of pupils with English as an additional language is carried out effectively by the specialist teacher and this results in profiles which document carefully salient background information. Good use is made of direct observation of pupils at work and ongoing evaluation is shared with teachers. The school's assessment arrangements and the detailed tracking of progress is effectively used to target support.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by a programme that combines withdrawal to a specialist teaching base with individual support in class that is provided by designated teaching assistants. Pupils benefit from focused learning activities. Teachers' planning includes clearly set out details of the support that will be required in order to include pupils in all activities. Teachers set targets in pupils' individual education plans jointly with the special needs co-ordinators so that these may be readily incorporated into lesson plans. Pupils engage positively with tasks, often demonstrating independence and initiative because of the high quality of the support they receive.
16. In other classes, teachers give clear explanations based on their good subject knowledge and give good guidance so pupils feel confident to move forward. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress that they make. All teachers are fully trained in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good and often very good. In English and mathematics, assessment data is used very well and work is carefully matched to individuals' needs so that pupils feel confident and learn well.
17. Pupils are taught well to use and apply their knowledge and understanding, such as in science, where young pupils investigated at first hand the effect of wind as a force. Activities such as this give clear purpose to learning from a very early age. Teachers ask appropriate questions

focused on pupils of different ability and English skills, and these are effective in furthering all pupils' progress and ensuring all pupils are fully included in activities. The best questioning was vigorous and made pupils think carefully about answers to their questions. This was seen in a very successful Year 6 mathematics lesson, when the teacher adapted the level of questioning in response to the understanding shown in the pupils' answers. She asked searching questions that made pupils think and find out answers for themselves.

18. Planning is very good. In all classes, teachers' plans include specific provision for different groups of pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are therefore high and well focused on their various capabilities. This is well rooted in the use of assessments carried out at the end of lessons, when a plenary session is often used to check up on what pupils have learned. At the end of a Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson for example, pupils were asked to read out the poems they had written and the teacher offered suggestions for improvement, focused on the learning objectives whilst paying strong attention to the good points in pupils' writing. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and this is effective because pupils know what is expected of them as a result. The use of assessment to inform planning and support learning across the school is very good. Teachers use previous learning very effectively to identify next steps in pupils' learning. During the week of inspection, very good examples were seen of pupils using self-assessment to review their learning and that of other pupils. Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and updated and the analysis used judiciously to identify where support is needed. Targets for improvements are shared with pupils and in the best examples are followed through when work is marked. Pupils respond well to how their work is assessed and this enables them to make good, and for a significant number of pupils, very good progress.
19. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their management of pupils is very good and teachers consistently apply the school's agreed approach to behaviour management, so pupils are well aware of what is expected of them and that there is no compromise of standards. All teachers recognise and comment on those pupils who are co-operating and others soon follow the example and quickly settle at change of activity for example. Because these approaches are applied consistently, pupils know where they stand and these results in an effective learning environment in all classes. Because teachers have a positive approach to pupils' behaviour, pupils feel valued and this forms the basis of good relationships between pupils and teachers.

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good curriculum** with a very broad range of learning opportunities that are matched to the interests, abilities and particular needs of pupils. The **curriculum is very well enriched** by a good range of visits and visitors to the school. Overall the **accommodation and resources are good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum gives very good support to pupils to help them build up their skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject.
- The whole school curriculum plan is very clear – with full and wide coverage of all national curriculum subjects and foundation stage areas of learning.
- The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is very good.
- There is a good focus on linking skills across each subject and using pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills well.
- Good monitoring of the curriculum by the headteacher and senior staff ensures new initiatives are implemented effectively.
- Accommodation is good overall, however, the four story main building, with some rooms only accessed through others, offers some inconvenience.

Commentary

20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is a seamless unit with clear progression and continuity and which provides excellent preparation for work further through the school. This curriculum is of an excellent quality and includes a very wide range of experiences including both informal and those of a structured nature.
21. The school has a very good curriculum that meets all statutory requirements for pupils in Years 1 to 6, including very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. There are good systems in place for reviewing and updating policies and schemes of work for the different subjects by the senior managers of the school, so the curriculum is always up to date. The curriculum is very carefully planned using a two year cycle to ensure that mixed age classes in particular get their full entitlement to the curriculum. There is a very good focus on linking skills across each subject, with pupils especially using their English, mathematics and information and communication skills very well to support other subjects such as history, art and music.
22. The curriculum is well enriched by a good range of activities extra to the curriculum, activities drawn from drama, sport and music. The school provides well for all pupils regardless of ability or need. All have ease of access to a high quality planned scheme of work to meet their needs whether they have special educational needs, are from homes where English is not the mother tongue or are capable of working at a higher level. The programme to support pupils' personal, social and health education has been carefully constructed to reflect the Catholic ethos of the school and is linked well to other areas of the curriculum including science, music and English as well as collective worship.
23. Pupils with special educational needs have very well constructed individual educational plans that focus on specific and measurable targets, the relevance of which is made clear to them. In both the planning and delivery of the curriculum, teachers build in frequent reminders about key vocabulary so that pupils gradually acquire the language skills that will enable them to discuss and interpret information. The carefully structured planning of tasks for pupils who have special educational needs is evident in the logically sequenced activities they undertake in their recorded work.
24. All curriculum areas are well resourced and the buildings, including the extensive staircases, are attractively enhanced with interesting displays and pupils' work. The number of teachers, together with the way in which the timetable operates, allows them to work on their specialist areas as well as classroom teaching. In the classrooms, the teachers are well supported by the teaching assistants.
25. Pupils in the foundation stage are accommodated in separate single story buildings and the outdoor play area for the nursery is attractively laid out and equipped. The nursery accommodation is, however, cramped with very little storage space, and no place for the pupils to work or rest quietly; a facility they all need from time to time. The main building is four stories high, which means that pupils' movement up and down the long staircases has to be managed very carefully in order to ensure their safety. Having to pass through one classroom to get to another is inconvenient but this does not interrupt the lesson flow in these rooms. There is a good number of other rooms of varying sizes to which pupils can be withdrawn for small group or individual work, and these are used well.

Care, guidance and support

The care that the school takes of pupils **and the guidance** given **is very good**. The school is good at involving pupils and listening to their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including child protection are very good.
- All staff have a positive relationship with pupils, care for them and guide their personal development very well.
- Pupils care for and support one another.
- Pupils with special needs and pupils with English as an additional language are identified and sensitively supported.
- The school takes a good account of pupils' views in running the school.

Commentary

26. Child protection procedures are usefully in place with the headteacher successfully undertaking the role of designated person. All members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area. Routines for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are well established with several staff trained in emergency first aid. There is a comprehensive Health and Safety policy in place and thorough risk assessments are carried out every year. Safety checks on potentially dangerous equipment take place annually, alarms are tested regularly and practice evacuations of the premises take place each term with their timings and any difficulties recorded. This raises the awareness of all in health and safety procedures and ensures safety equipment is effective if needed.
27. Teachers, teaching assistant and all the other staff in school know the pupils and their families very well. The way that staff speak to the pupils is always in a calm tone and caring manner. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress is thorough, and through the use of circle time and private discussions, staff are able to share in the pupils' personal development. This is clearly shown in the perceptive comments that teachers make in annual reports to parents. Pupils are also good at taking care of each other. Not just in the way that they naturally work and play together, but through more formal methods such as Year 2 buddies with pupils in reception and the Playground Squad. Membership of this squad of 15 pupils (three on duty per day) is taken very seriously, and sought after. They try to ensure good order in the playground, discourage any signs of bullying and check that no one is friendless. Generally all the other pupils accept their authority. The school has effective induction procedures for EAL pupils so that they are settled quickly and are fully integrated. This clearly contributes to the progress they make.
28. All pupils, and particularly the class representatives themselves, take the work of the School Council very seriously. Although it has not been running for very long it has already had a significant impact, and each representative has compiled a list of issues that they want the council to address to improve the school. The survey of pupils' views shows that they enjoy school, the staff and friendships that they make as well as the academic work that they have to do. It is significant that only a very few pupils felt that they do not know an adult that they can turn to if they have a problem.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and with the wider local community is very good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school.
- Parents support for the work of the school is very good.
- Links with the wider community, especially the church are very effective.

Commentary

29. Parents are generally very happy with the school. In meeting parents at school, informally and at the parents meeting, and from the questionnaire, no significant concerns were expressed. Parents appreciate the standards that their children achieve, the care that the school takes the standards of behaviour and the general ethos of the school.
30. The school provides parents with relevant information through frequent letters and regular newsletters. Parents feel able to approach the school at any time if they have any concerns about how their children are progressing. In the summer term, parents receive the annual reports on individual pupils. These reports are good and appreciated by parents: they describe what the pupil has done, what standards they have achieved, some comments on things that are not so good or need working on, targets for future development and there is a perceptive commentary on social and personal development.
31. Some parents, however, expressed concern about the information provided particularly about pupils' progress. The inspection team could find no reason to explain why parents should be concerned in this way, except that the criticism of the annual report not being available until the last day of the summer term last year. This was valid as it meant that there was limited time for discussion with staff.
32. Parents help their children at home in their homework assignments and a number come into school to assist in class. A good number attend school functions and make themselves available to accompany school trips and assist with after school clubs. They also support the fundraising activities of the school and the Parents Group. This group meets regularly under the chairmanship of a governor to discuss any issues of concern to parents that might have arisen and also raises substantial funds which have been used to improve the school's facilities and provide additional resources.
33. The school's relationship with the priests and parish of St Dominic's is a very close one. It significantly enriches the ethos of the school on a daily basis. The priests regularly come into school to take assemblies and generally assist in the Religious Education curriculum, including preparing pupils for their first communion. The weekly parish newsletter from St Dominic's is distributed in school to all families.
34. Pupils enjoy a range of activities with the wider community. The police and fire brigade visit regularly, as do a variety of performing groups and sometimes distinguished visitors such as a Member of Parliament and the Mayor. Additionally they visit places of interest such as the library and museums, and a synagogue. They participate in a range of sporting activities run by the Camden School Sports Association. Throughout the year, the school participates in a good range of charity fundraising. All of this adds value to the very good quality of education provided.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The clearly understood roles and responsibilities within both the school and the governing body are rigorously followed through. **The Governing Body** provides a **good level of support** for the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a dynamic and an enthusiastic manager of change, her leadership is well focused on ensuring that systems relate directly to enhancing pupils' achievement.
- There is very good coordination between the school improvement plan, performance management of staff, school self-evaluation and the school's monitoring and assessment

processes that is sustaining an effective drive for improvement. Priorities are well defined and acted upon.

- The skills of personnel represented on the senior leadership team complement one another well so that it is able to actively influence all areas of school activity with authority.
- The developing governing body has been efficient in delegating responsibility to committees that are proactive in exercising their monitoring role and in providing challenge and support for the headteacher.
- There is now scope to further extend the Governing Body's strategic role.
- The high level of commitment of staff and governors is directly linked to the success of the school in being effective with very high standards and good levels of achievement within an area of significant ethnic diversity.

Commentary

35. The headteacher ensures that there is a strong sense of direction provided for the school that is keenly focused on challenging goals aimed at achieving the highest possible standards, together with nurturing a very strong ethos of inclusion in harmony with its Catholic tradition. Under the guidance of the team of senior leaders and curriculum leaders who are rigorous in their support for teaching and learning, everyone involved in the school is encouraged to be evaluative and reflective while carrying out their clearly defined roles, so helping the school to be sure of its capacity to realise its intentions. In particular, curriculum leaders benefit from regular release from their teaching duties in order to carry out their responsibilities. In this way, monitoring and assessment procedures are used very well to ensure that all pupils have access to a rich curriculum and that a high level of support is available to resolve difficulties in learning. There is a shared commitment to ensuring that both time and resources are fully targeted on maintaining high quality provision so that a strength of the school is its sense of purpose, recognising that the pupils must be at the heart of everything that it undertakes to do. The headteacher's careful monitoring ensures both quality and consistency in the delivery of all these aims that are well embedded in the practice of the school.
36. The very good standards that the school achieves in statutory tests at the end of Year 6 are supported very effectively through the clear insight that leadership staff have into the achievements of all pupils who come from a diverse range of backgrounds. This level of awareness is realised through assessment and target setting that is based on thoroughly analysed data but which also maintains a focus on the individual, placing achievement in the context of the whole child. Because of this focus, all pupils, regardless of religious belief, gender, ethnicity, social background or ability, are helped to achieve as well as they can and the school is ambitious in its efforts to constantly improve performance at all levels and to realise its stated aims on the full inclusion of all pupils and equal opportunity for all.
37. The management of special educational needs is very good. Very good leadership and guidance provided by the school's special needs co-ordinators is ensuring that all teachers are confident in meeting pupils' needs, working with individual education plans and targets that they have been helped to set. Teachers are further supported with helpful resource materials and texts and newly qualified colleagues benefit from the input of the expertise of the co-ordinators into their training programme. There is a governor for special needs who is very well informed, showing a good level of insight into what the school is doing and what its needs are. The headteacher line manages the special needs co-ordinators and this is a deliberate choice that arises from her commitment to giving high status to their work. The deployment of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is appropriately targeted to provide for specialist staffing. The teacher in charge of this provision is approachable and provides good advice and guidance to staff.
38. The school's systems for planned improvement and self-evaluation are very good. They link well with teachers' performance management so that staff work as a team, to achieve whole school targets, and individually to improve specific areas of performance either in areas that they manage or in the attainment of pupils in their classes. Governors are similarly involved in the cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation. They are organised into purposeful committees that monitor progress as well as offering challenge and support to help the school to deliver its improvement programme effectively. Although they rely to some extent on the firm trust they have in the headteacher and her team to define the needs of the school for its development planning, they participate fully in evaluation and exercise their capacity for making amendments that result from the input of their considerable range of expertise. Several governors are relatively new to the role and the school has accessed training programmes to support them. Financial systems and controls are well developed and implemented through the effective partnership of the bursar, headteacher and governors' finance committee so that accommodation and resources are appropriately managed, there are clear lines of accountability and funds are directly targeted on needs identified in the school improvement plan. The budget is well monitored and the bursar provides an additional commentary for

governors in her reports. When above average standards are balanced against below average costs for similar schools in the borough, the school clearly gives very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial year:	2002-3	2003-4 projected
	£	£
Total Income (formula funded and specific grants)	1030597	1127817
Balance brought forward from previous year	75648	22815
Funds Available	1106245	1150632
Total Expenditure	1083430	1150248
Balance carried forward to next year	22815 (2.2%)	384 (0.03%)
Expenditure per pupil	3069	3286

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is one of the strengths of the school. The children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average, and a significant number have very poorly developed speaking and listening skills and personal, social and emotional development. The teachers concentrate on the development of language and social skills, although because of the low starting point, there are still some weaker areas in their communication, language and literacy skills at the end of Reception. The children make a very positive start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They achieve very well and by the time they enter Year 1 of the school, most have met the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage in most of the areas of learning. This is because the teaching is very good and the excellent curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are very well matched to all pupils' different needs. The provision is very well managed, and the children's progress is extremely carefully monitored. All adults manage children very well and the excellent ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are very well met.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very clear working practice within both the nurseries and the reception class gives children confidence and security.
- Routines are well-established and well-known to the children.
- Adults relate very well together and children see this very good practice.
- Adults treat all within the nursery and reception classes with respect. They listen carefully to the children and encourage them to make suggestions that are taken seriously.
- There are frequent sessions where children can talk about behaviour and relationships.

Commentary

40. Children make very good progress towards meeting the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Because the staff make sure that the individual needs of all pupils are identified at an early stage and met very effectively, all pupils; boys and girls; those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve equally well. Children successfully learn the difference between right and wrong. When disputes arise between children, adults carefully intervene to help children negotiate living and working together without resorting to physical action. Children know and trust their teachers and supporting adults and will ask them for help to learn. They are developing the confidence and ability to take turns, share resources and equipment together. While younger children are developing the skill of comfortably working alongside each other, older children are beginning to learn how to combine knowledge and skills to work with each other. Adults actively encourage children to work together in different groups on a range of activities and opportunities are provided for reception children to return to the nursery and nursery children to work in the reception with their friends. Firm relationships between pupils are positively encouraged. Nursery teachers have established frequent, brief sessions where children can talk through problems and discuss behaving well, helping each other, taking turns and the differences between right and wrong. Children in reception also have opportunities to talk together, share special events and support each other in and out of class.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for children's communication, language and literacy development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of children's vocabulary combined with the confidence and skills to use the words learnt is very good.
- Teachers make very good use of language as role models for children and all language skills are positively promoted.
- Teachers and other adult helpers constantly monitor and assess children's attainment and progress.

Commentary

41. From a well below average start for many children in the nursery, children make very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. However, because of the well below average starting point for many children, a significant number do not reach the nationally expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. They are encouraged to develop a wide vocabulary because there are a range of very good activities planned to enable children to communicate with each other as well as with the very good numbers of supporting adults. Those who have a special educational need related to the development of their communication skills are fully included in the nursery in particular by all the staff and in reception by activities targeted to meet their needs. Those pupils with English as an additional language are also very effectively encouraged to learn English vocabulary and gain confidence through speaking new words in front of other children, with high levels of sympathetic support and encouragement. Learning new vocabulary is consolidated, providing children with a rich language environment with very good use of labels, diagrams and books in displays in all rooms.
42. Adults positively encourage a love of books. Children enjoy looking at books and are becoming confident when talking about what they have read. They follow stories read by their teachers and other staff and are developing well the skill to identify letters and their sounds. Higher attaining children are beginning to read simple texts with fluency and use sound and picture clues to deal with unfamiliar words. Each room has an area where children can share a book, however, the facility of a quiet room where children can withdraw to be alone, read a book with a teacher or friend or just chat informally is not available at present though plans are in place to provide such a room when funds allow. Adults harness children's natural fascination with what they hear using stories, poems, songs and discussions in formal and informal work across the day.
43. Many opportunities are provided during the day for children to record their ideas and feelings. Each room is well equipped with pencils, crayons, markers and paper. Adults work very hard to make all experiences enjoyable and monitor children's response and achievement to provide further challenges through very high quality assessments of what children know, understand and can do.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's mathematical development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of children's counting and number recognition skills is very good.
- Children are encouraged very effectively to use their mathematical skills in a range of activities during the day.

- Positive promotion of mathematical vocabulary contributes to children's very good achievement.
- Learning is made enjoyable and interesting.

Commentary

44. Number skills are weak when children first start in the nursery. However, by the time children leave reception, most are able to count and recognise number shapes to at least 10, with many being able to count and identify higher numbers. Through the use of stories involving a number of characters, children are introduced to the idea of a number as well as recognising and working with that number. Many opportunities are provided during the day for children to sing, count and play with numbers and recognise number shapes as well as learn about capacity and volume in free play activities such as sand and water, giving children a good start in mathematical knowledge and understanding.
45. Each activity in child focused work as well as in more formal activities has children grouped by number. Four for instance paint or play in the home corner, use the train track or construct a model with plastic bricks. Two ride a wheeled toy, which they park in a numbered parking place. Children climb on the climbing frame one at a time. During the day, children have the opportunity to work on their own with an adult, counting or completing a task with careful support. Teachers make very good role models for children, using the vocabulary of such as big and little, first, last and middle correctly in all the work in the nursery and reception classes. Adults harness children's enjoyment of counting to numbers working in different areas in the nursery and in more formal counting sessions in reception. Very good provision enables most to achieve very successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to use computers both in the nursery and reception classes.
- The care of themselves and of creatures is developed well.
- Early geographical skills are developed effectively.
- Scientific investigation skills establish a good basis for further work.

Commentary

46. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills of observing and commenting on the world around them. They make very good progress throughout their time in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Children develop well their observational skills; reception children look at the fruits found in the book 'Handa's Surprise' and use their sense of taste to identify those they like best. This focus encourages children to find out more about the food, fruit, animals and birds in the natural world. Teachers use the development of scientific enquiry skills to encourage children to use their senses to investigate such as fruit and vegetables. Children enjoyed the feel, smell and taste of such as kiwi and oranges, making close observational drawings while discussing the colour and textures and how to show them creatively. Computer programmes let children practice and extend their knowledge of language and mathematics while learning how to use the equipment competently, developing their eye/hand co-ordination through the use of the mouse and the keyboard.
47. During afternoon activities In the nursery, music and stories from different countries helps children understand that not everyone comes from Britain but that stories told in this country are similar the world over. This also supports children's development in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave reception they know a lot about the natural world, about animals and other creatures, where they live, the foods they eat and how to look after them. Likewise they know a lot about themselves and their families as well as the geography of the school and the local area. Older children think of their way round the school and are learning geographical language including turn at such as the post box when discussing their

routes and moving to the hall, playground or their outdoor area. They also develop an awareness of the passage of time and know their parents are older than they are but also they have younger brothers and sisters.

48. Although nursery children have the opportunity to cook, they have to go to an adult size kitchen attached to the reception class. Health and safety regards mean that this can only occur when staff can be spared from the work within the nursery and children cannot watch materials change, for instance chocolate melt as the stove is above their sight lines.

CREATIVE AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children's physical and creative development is very well promoted.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities to paint and use a range of modelling materials enable children to work creatively.
- The opportunity to play together in large and small spaces is good.
- Role-play is used very well to help children understand others' point of view.
- A good range of physical skills are developed well through a rich range of opportunity for activity.

Commentary

49. The development of physical and creative skills goes hand in hand in both the nursery and reception classes. All children achieve very well through a wide range of appropriate physical and creative opportunities. They have the opportunity to ride and climb outdoors as well as use a very good range of tools and equipment within the classrooms. Children in the nursery are encouraged to use a range of small equipment, including a good range of construction toys to develop their fine control skills as well as their eye/hand co-ordination, while reception children have more formal writing practice to develop manipulative skills using a range of pencils and markers. As a result, children are able to use a wide range of resources with dexterity ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils are encouraged to think about movement and space within the classrooms and modify their behaviour to ensure that all can work safely together. There is very good opportunity for physical skills work in the outdoor area and children develop very well the ability to work on sport activities such as throwing and catching, skipping and other ball skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and often very good teaching for older pupils promotes good achievement for all pupils.
- A shared commitment to improvement by staff, governors, pupils and parents.
- Very good leadership by the co-ordinators.
- Thorough assessment of pupils' work and very good use of information gained to improve teaching and learning.
- A rigorous approach to teaching the basic skills of reading, speaking and listening, phonics, spelling and writing.
- Pupils' exemplary attitudes and their perseverance.
- Attractive quality resources including a good range of both fiction and non fiction books.

- Homework is used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

50. The school has made good progress in developing pupils' English skills since the previous inspection. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are below average and achieve well so that by the end of Year 6, standards in each area are above average. The school has effectively adapted the national literacy strategy to meet all pupils' needs. In addition, the high quality of assessment arrangements, the analysis of information and its use to positively support groups and individuals has enabled the school to maintain high standards. The quality of teaching has improved well since the previous inspection and is now good and often very good.
51. By Year 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below the national average and above average by the end of Year 6. As the pupils move through the school, and as pupils with English as an additional language in particular, begin to build on their earlier learning, their performance improves. This is also because the school plans effectively for speaking and listening and uses other subjects to promote discussion skills. In many lessons seen during the week of inspection, pupils were enabled to brainstorm ideas in pairs and confer when attempting to answer more open-ended questions. This was well exemplified in a history lesson where pupils had to compare schools in Ancient Greece with those of today and plan a debate on the merits of each.
52. Pupils achieve well in developing their reading skills and standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers have a rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics and basic reading skills. The school's emphasis on the teaching of sound and letter patterns in the early years is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This establishes a firm foundation for younger pupils and on which older pupils can build securely. By the end of Year 6, pupils read a good range of texts with a fair degree of fluency and accuracy with high attaining pupils showing good expression. They have a good range of strategies to read independently. Higher attaining pupils recognise the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and express references. The majority of pupils have developed research skills, which they use effectively in other subjects. Teachers assess pupils' progress effectively and their records contain useful information on pupils' progress including targets for improvements. Library facilities have improved since the last inspection with a good number of books to meet the pupils' needs and encourage an interest in literature and books.
53. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils develop their ideas in sequence, use capital letters with most words correctly spelt. However, whilst many pupils manage to communicate meaning, a good number do not write in sentences, sustain ideas or develop them sufficiently. Pupils write in a range of forms with good examples of instructional writing, poetry and other non-fiction writing. Handwriting is satisfactory with the majority still producing non-joined writing. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils write extensively and produce a variety of narrative and non-narrative texts. Evidence from analysis of work shows many good examples of writing of different kinds, including play scripts, biographies and interviews. The highest attaining pupils produce writing that is imaginative, extensive and varied, showing a good grasp of paragraphing and structure. Teaching methods are wisely selected for maximum impact and in the best teaching are used well, particularly to support pupils with English as an additional language, through using pupils' skills well. A good example consisted for instance in a Year 3 lesson, of getting pupils to feel into a bag and describe an item to encourage them to use adjectives in preparation for writing a shape poem. The same processes of brainstorming, drafting and redrafting were encouraged as pupils wrote their own poems with good results. Pupils achieve well against their prior attainment as a result of the school's recent increased focus on a more structured two week cycle, often planned to prepare for extended writing when pupils have sufficiently rehearsed a particular type of writing. Written work is effectively assessed and in the best examples, marking provides pupils with a clear idea of their strengths and where they need to improve.

54. The subject is very well led by two enthusiastic and committed curriculum leaders. Both have worked very hard in reviewing provision across a broad range of aspects, particularly in relation to the analysis of areas of weakness. This has led to the development of a coherent action plan effectively focussed on raising pupils' achievement. Both the analysis of data and the monitoring of teaching and learning have been used to identify key priorities for developing the subject and to identify those pupils who need extra support. The use of information and communication technology is regularly planned and often well focussed to enhance literacy skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Speaking and listening skills are very effectively promoted in a wide range of subjects and these opportunities are carefully planned to develop these skills and add interest in other subjects such as history or science. Pupils use research skills well across other subjects and write effectively in a good range of forms appropriate to different subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school progressively improve and by the end of Year 6, standards are well above national expectations.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well.
- There is a very good assessment programme and data is used very well in ensuring work for pupils at all levels of attainment, is appropriate yet challenging.
- Pupils respond very well to the individual target setting system and the consequent rewards for achievement in mathematics.
- The school has successfully addressed an identified need to develop pupils' use and application of mathematics skills because of a committed, whole school response to focusing on priorities.

Commentary

56. As a result of a very good start in the Foundation Stage, most pupils enter Year 1 having met or almost met the standards set by the Early Learning Goals. This good level of progress is maintained throughout the school and well above average standards are reached by the end of Year 6.
57. Pupils develop number skills effectively as for example, they move on from pointing out numbers along a number line as they count on and back in ones, to working with number patterns and simple word problems by the end of Year 2 when standards overall have moved to a level that is just above the national expectation. However, several pupils at this stage are still held back by the limitations of their level of English language acquisition and as a result the number that achieves the higher Level 3 is below that nationally or in similar schools. Again, pupils achieve very well during their time in Years 3 to 6 in response to teaching that is not only carefully planned to stimulate learning but which also focuses keenly on the development of key vocabulary to address the needs of pupils who have special needs and those for pupils with English as an additional language. A good example of the success of this focus is the level of confidence that is evident when a group of less able pupils in Year 6 show that they are expected to demonstrate initiative and independence when arriving for their mathematics lesson by routinely organising a jumbled number line and matching shapes to labels that have been displaced. As a result of teachers' awareness of the individual needs of their pupils, all

achieve very well and standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average overall and sometimes very high in respect of the proportion of pupils that reach the higher Level 5.

58. Good teaching throughout the school makes effective use of a very good assessment programme so that learning is able to build on a clear understanding of what pupils have achieved and what they should learn next. Achievement is celebrated and rewarded as pupils meet their individual and group targets that have been carefully set by their teachers. There is a good level of challenge evident in most lessons and expectations are high. Pupils respond very well to lessons because they generally take place at a good pace, enable all to be involved through very good question and answer techniques employed and also benefit from the good subject knowledge of the teachers. Homework is also well used to enhance learning and pupils have opportunities to have this explained by their teachers during lunch breaks if further support is needed.
59. An experienced and effective curriculum leader has ensured that the recently identified priority of focusing on pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematics has been translated effectively from policy into practice, although a further extension to this will be to provide pupils with additional opportunities for independent enquiry, testing out predictions and carrying out their own investigations. She is constantly seeking to promote new areas for development and has recognised the need to liaise with other co-ordinators in order to structure the development of skills in mathematics so that pupils are ready to use these when they are required in other subjects. Very good use is made of release time in order to monitor teaching and learning and this is having a direct, positive impact on standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. In addition to using information and communication technology to enhance learning, mathematics skills are used well across the curriculum. The success of the recent initiative to extend pupils' ability to apply the skills learned in mathematics is particularly evident in their work in science and in their handling of data when using computer control technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6.
- All pupils achieve well.
- There is a good emphasis on experimental and investigative science and pupils develop very good skills in this area of science.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Assessment data is used very effectively to target work well to pupils' individual needs.
- Leadership and management in science are very good.

Commentary

61. Because of the structure of the curriculum, science was not taught in Years 3 to 6 at the time of the inspection. However, the school provided sufficient evidence on which to make reliable judgements about standards and provision at all stages of the school. These were supported through discussion with pupils and with the curriculum leader.
62. Pupils in Year 6 of different capabilities are confident to talk with good understanding about their work. Higher attaining pupils, pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, talk knowledgeably, for example, about different ways of separating

mixtures or about how different types of forces create movement. Their good level of knowledge of different systems within the human body is strengthened through their clear understanding of how systems such as digestion, respiration, muscles and the skeleton all interact and work in co-operation with each other. This level of understanding enables pupils to justify and give reasons for their statements and is demonstrated in all areas of science, where standards are well above average.

63. Investigative approaches to learning science are very well promoted throughout the school. Teachers are aware of this and strive to improve this method of learning for all pupils. Pupils make very good progress in developing these skills and by the time they reach Year 6 they know how to design appropriate investigations to answer a particular question. In doing this they make hypotheses detailing what they think the outcomes will be, choose appropriate resources to check their predictions and give explanations of why things happened. This was seen when Year 1 and 2 pupils investigated a set of objects, including a pencil sharpener and a jam jar, that all required the force of twisting to make them work. Good levels of questioning and discussion, with good opportunity for pupils to demonstrate and explain, support pupils' good levels of achievement. Good attention is paid to pupils with English as an additional language and key words are explained clearly so that they have a good understanding of what is happening and are able to participate fully. Likewise teachers, direct more difficult questions to the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are included through appropriate level of questions. All pupils feel confident and respond well. Younger pupils in Year 1 worked well when they went outside and investigated the wind as a force. As a result of very good teaching in this lesson, pupils observed the effect of the wind on trees and leaves on the playground and developed a very secure understanding of forces and how they can impact on everyday life. One pupil with limited English said, "I saw the wind." and realising what he had said, quickly changed it to, "I felt the wind." Pupils at all levels of attainment made significant contributions to the activity and all made good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the nature of forces. Teachers use assessment procedures well to assess pupils' attainment and achievement. They use the information gained effectively to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment are provided with work at an appropriate level, which they can cope with, but which is still challenging and moves them on at a good pace.
64. The quality of teaching is good and is characterised by high expectations, good subject knowledge, very good pupil management and very good use of assessment information. Very good subject management also makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement and very high standards. The curriculum leader has made a very thorough assessment of the provision in this subject and, although science is not taught each term and there are sometimes lengthy periods of time when pupils do not study science directly, he is able to provide evidence that pupils have the opportunity to develop their research skills in other subjects and that the curriculum is designed to develop skills in a continuous and progressive manner. The curriculum leader has a strong knowledge of how to manage science and recent initiatives for development have been well matched to the school's needs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is good and this means pupils achieve above average standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well over their time in the school and attain above average standards.
- All pupils, regardless of their prior ability, ethnic background or gender make good progress and enjoy their work, especially using the new computer suite.
- There is good use of information and communication technology in other subject areas.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.
- Assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is good.
- The resources for the subject are good and are used well by both teachers and support staff.

Commentary

65. The achievement of boys and girls throughout the school is good and standards by the end of Year 6 are above those expected nationally and there are signs that these are set to rise further. The school has maintained the good provision for all pupils and high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. All, boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language are fully involved in all lessons. The pace of learning is good with teachers skilfully ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to explore within programs as well as developing their skills of controlling equipment. It is planned to enhance the control element by focusing on pupil's keyboard skills in the near future. All teaching and support staff have had appropriate training in using the range of information and technology equipment. The curriculum leader for information and communication technology is also available to give advice and support staff in the suite as necessary, thereby giving teachers the confidence in teaching using computers. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their progress and achievement at the end of each lesson or unit of work using a range of prepared assessment sheets. Teachers monitor these sheets and use the information to plan the next block of work for the class.
66. As pupils progress through the school, teachers ensure that a secure skills base is established for all pupils. The curriculum is well designed so that knowledge and understanding is developed in a progressive way.
67. The very good leadership given by the curriculum leader has been particularly effective in raising confidence of teachers and pupils alike. A very well skilled and knowledgeable teacher, she has managed events well. She has ensured that all teachers have had training in using the new suite. She has made sure that equipment is up to date and maintained well without drawing all the computers from classrooms. This enables pupils to continue work started in the suite, especially using their developing research and practice skills at other times of the week. She has worked hard to ensure that the scheme of work is matched to the resources available. Although standards are good with the majority of pupils reaching above national targets, she is now planning how to extend those pupils who are capable of working to a higher level.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Information and communication technology is used as a formidable tool to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils use their skills well to support learning in other curriculum areas. In the samples of work for instance, pupils had used the Internet to gain information to support their work in history and geography. They use word processing skills to present their stories and poems in attractive ways, they use art programmes to illustrate their writing and mathematics programmes to reinforce number skills. During the inspection, older pupils were considering the safety aspects of using chat rooms, using the internet to explore a safe site and discussing the differences between that one and those it is possible to access from home.

HUMANITIES

There was limited evidence for geography during the week of inspection because no lessons were seen, and therefore no judgement can be made about the quality of provision in the subject.

History

Provision in history is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in history is good and sometimes very good and this enables pupils to achieve well.
- History is used effectively to promote literacy skills.
- Leadership and support provided by the curriculum leader is good.

Commentary

69. Standards in history by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and above by Year 6. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. This is mainly reflected in their increasing use of historical evidence to record their findings and in the use of different sources of information. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They listen attentively; work collaboratively on tasks and show curiosity. This contributes to the progress they make. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
70. From evidence of previous work, most pupils develop a secure sense of chronology and draw comparisons between life today and life in the past. Higher attaining pupils research information on historical topics and use the Internet effectively to find information. They understand and identify differences between now and in the past, using a wealth of information from photographs on seaside resorts for example. In Years 3-6, pupils build on their previous knowledge and understanding of different periods of British history. They learn the skills of historical enquiry well. Teachers use the subject effectively to promote literacy skills and this is a distinctive strength in the teaching of the subject. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, the teacher used effective methods enabling pupils to extract information from a range of texts and then discuss their finding in small groups. Throughout the lesson, pupils worked collaboratively, listening to each other, taking turns in the discussion and recording key information. As a result of activities such as this, pupils show good skills in carrying research, and in using books and computers to find appropriate sources of information. This is clearly reflected in the high standards of work in Year 6 and in the range of topics covered with information and communication technology being effectively used to find and present information.
71. History is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable curriculum leader who helps ensure consistently good standards. She has a clear overview of standards and teaching by scrutinising pupils' exercise books, monitoring planning and lesson observations. As a result of this, she has been able to identify clear targets for improving the subject with a view to enhancing the use of information and communication technology and ensuring that there is better progression of skills. Assessment arrangements are good with older pupils often encouraged and expected to evaluate their own learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good achievement and above average standards.
- Extended range of high quality experiences.
- Good attention to appreciating art from many different cultures.
- Useful tapping into the considerable expertise of artists in residence.

Commentary

72. No lessons were seen in art and design and therefore it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning. However, the high quality of work on display and in school portfolios indicates well above average standards throughout the school. Discussion with the temporary co-ordinator and scrutiny of curriculum documents and planning show that pupils experience a very broad curriculum, having the opportunity to work with a wide range of materials. There is a clearly sequenced development of skills evident in pupils' work, which establishes a pattern of sustained very good achievement as pupils move through the school. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a broad range of activities and applied many techniques. They make clay and plaster plaques, work in the style of Turner, Cezanne and Lowry when painting. In an endeavour to replicate the effect of Impressionist artists' work, pupils found the cotton bud technique worked well, once dipped in paint and dabbed on. Commentary beside work displayed helps pupils to evaluate their work and to consider how they may improve it by, for example, employing a different technique. The contribution of an artist in residence supports high quality artwork.
73. Art and design makes a strong contribution towards developing pupils' understanding of many cultures other than and including the one in which they live, including Aboriginal, American and Canadian. Pupils study the work of established artists and experience art from different cultures, many represented in the school population. There is a regular art club, which encourages pupils' enjoyment and makes a very worthwhile contribution to pupils' very good achievements.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement across the age range.
- Good range of interesting and stimulating experiences provided

Commentary

74. There was not enough evidence to report on this subject fully in junior classes. Three lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and samples of work and a portfolio of evidence from across the full school was scrutinised. The subject was discussed with the temporary curriculum leader and schemes of work were examined.
75. Standards at the end of Years 2 are as expected for pupils of this age. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6 standards are above those expected for pupils of this age. Achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school is good. This is as a result of interesting activities provided that interest and stimulate pupils.
76. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 prepare good plans and sketches of what they want to make. During the inspection, their work was focussed on puppets and pupils were provided with a wide range of experiences in both designing and making. Activities included making a stick puppet, designing a puppet home using a good range of construction kits and the computer, and using their designs to make a house from card and a good range of other rigid materials. The lessons are well organised and enable pupils to work both independently and collaboratively with other pupils. Young pupils with English as an additional language, who are developing their English language skills, find this work particularly rewarding as they express their ideas practically and develop their language well through talking about their models.
77. Design and technology is given appropriate attention in the school curriculum and the good range of experiences provided supports effectively the good progress pupils make throughout the school. There are good links with other subjects; this enables pupils to appreciate the purpose of designing and making for different purposes and develop good skills through

opportunities to experience working with a good range of materials including food, fabrics, wood and card. Their work in design and technology supports pupils' cultural development well through topics such as those linked with other cultures in history and celebrating the Chinese New Year for example.

Music

Provision in music is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist teacher is very highly skilled and pupils achieve well as a result of very good teaching.
- Standards are good in singing and composition and satisfactory for other areas of the music curriculum such as appraisal and appreciation.
- There are very good opportunities to learn to play a range of instruments such as guitar, recorder, piano, violin, woodwind and brass.
- Pupils sing and perform well in such as assemblies.
- Leadership and management are very effective.
- Not all teachers stay when specialist teachers are taking their class; this can result in them losing their own skills and missing the opportunity for professional development.
- There is a good range of resources available for music.

Commentary

78. By the end of Year 6, standards are good in singing and composition of pupils' own music. Pupils enjoy singing together. In assemblies and singing practices, they take care to sing in tune with the piano, listen carefully to the melody and demonstrate a good sense of rhythm and dynamics. They control the volume of their singing well, showing the care and attention given to providing a pleasing performance from well-organised practice sessions. Throughout their lessons they are challenged to try hard and improve their personal performing and composing skills.
79. The quality of teaching is very good. The music specialist has put together a high quality curriculum and this, combined with her personal musical skills, ensures that pupils enthusiastically work with enjoyment on all activities. Only a very small group of the oldest pupils failed to appreciate the care with which the teacher had planned the range of musical opportunities within lessons. These pupils she managed well, challenging them to work hard and improve their skills of composition and performance. The teacher has a very clear structure to her lessons, using an evaluation of previous work to take learning further while reinforcing that covered previously. By the end of each session, all pupils know how well they have done over the period of the lesson. They also know how what they have done links to future work. In singing practices, for instance, they know that the hymns and songs they are learning now will be used in assemblies and public performances in the future. The teacher makes very good use of all the time available within music lessons. She settles pupils very well with a range of warm up activities, makes a prompt start and maintains a brisk pace. A very good singing role model she gives pupils the opportunity to learn to pitch accurately against a piano accompaniment. Unfortunately, the music room, though very spacious is sparsely furnished and has an echo and this blurs the sound produced and handicaps the development of pupils ability to pitch notes accurately. Pupils have good opportunities to learn a range of musical instruments with specialist teachers outside of the school day. Although there is not a school orchestra at the moment, the teacher knows the standards of all instrumental students and plans to offer them the opportunity to play together later in the year. When pupils take external music examinations, the whole school celebrates their success with opportunities provided for them to perform in classes and assemblies. The school has a good range of instruments to support the work within the school and these are subject to frequent review to ensure that they are appropriate, relevant and safe to use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

80. From the two lessons observed, it is not possible to make a judgement on standards, achievement or provision in physical education. However, from discussion with the curriculum leader and pupils it is evident that, after a very good start in the Foundation Stage, pupils continue to be provided with a curriculum that offers them many opportunities to develop and extend their skills through a wide range of activities. In discussion, pupils are able to describe how they progress from developing co-ordination and agility as they take part in parachute games to practising variations in flow and the level of operation when working with large apparatus and then on to evaluating their performance in games in terms of the tactics of invasion strategies and territorial advantage. All pupils have the opportunity to achieve the national standard for competency in swimming.
81. The curriculum leader is enthusiastic and very well organised. She consults teachers about their needs and organises effective support. A comprehensive scheme of work that is adapted from a national programme provides clear guidance while also ensuring that the full curriculum for physical education is delivered. Very good arrangements are in place for the curriculum leader to be released from her teaching commitment to carry out monitoring activities, the results of which are translated into action points.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. There is not enough evidence to report on this area individually, but in one lesson, as part of Year 6 information and communication technology, the school's good policy of supporting pupils' personal development was seen. Pupils had the opportunity of talking about keeping safe when using the Internet for home research. They were able to go to a vetted, safe site and investigate the range of puzzles, games and discussions the site possessed. A comparison with home sites was made and pupils were able to establish for themselves how they would use such sites at home and who they would inform if anything difficult or questionable appeared. The teacher had chosen this site with care and pupils demonstrated clear understanding of the need to be careful at all times in what they said and who they said it to.
83. Opportunity for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship have a significant impact on them. The very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the strong voice that they have in school decision making and the support they provide through the buddy system, support their very good attitudes and personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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