

INSPECTION REPORT

STAG LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Edgware

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102197

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Evans

Lead inspector: Tom Shine

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 5th November 2003

Inspection number: 258003

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8-12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	287
School address:	Collier Drive Edgware Middlesex
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Telephone number:	(0208) 952 2731
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Janice Main
Date of previous inspection:	14 th -17 th September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is three-form entry and is smaller than most middle schools. Most of its pupils transfer from the first school, which is located on the ground floor. Their attainment on entering the school varies from year to year but is generally low for their ages. Many leave the school at the end of Year 6 to go to secondary schools in other local authorities and others join the school in Year 7 on a temporary basis, while waiting for places in other high schools. Its pupils reflect the area's rich cultural and ethnic diversity and are drawn from backgrounds as far afield as the Asian sub-continent, Africa and the Caribbean. The majority come from homes where another language in addition to English is spoken, and most pupils are more competent in speaking than writing, particularly the younger pupils. Those who are in the early stages of learning English tend to be recent arrivals to this country, including refugees and asylum seekers, who speak a variety of languages at home including Somali, Albanian and Farsi. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (mainly moderate learning difficulties) is above the national average with the number of those with statements being broadly average. The social and economic make-up of the area is broadly lower than normally found with an above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Recently, the school has received a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24254	Tom Shine	Lead inspector	Science, geography, history, English as an additional language.
8991	Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector	
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	English, physical education, special educational needs.
18703	Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music.
2229	Doreen Hansen	Team inspector	Religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school where all staff really care for their pupils and provide exceptional levels of support to ensure their needs are met very well. Good teachers work hard to push pupils to do their best and to achieve very well. Under the headteacher's excellent leadership, a strong team with high staff morale has been formed that is committed to raise standards. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- outstanding leadership of the headteacher who, together with her senior staff, manages the school very well, with the exception of a very large budgetary surplus;
- pupils' achievements in Year 6 are high because of the very good teaching, although marking is inconsistent throughout the school;
- pupils' maturity and caring and sensitive manner lead to very positive attitudes to their work;
- very good links with parents are valued by the school;
- standards in physical education are below those typical for pupils' ages throughout the school because teaching in this subject is not good enough; and
- standards are still unsatisfactory in Years 6 and 7 in some aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) despite substantial improvements since the last inspection and the technology is not used enough to help pupils learn across the curriculum.

The school has improved well since the last inspection in 1998 and has effectively tackled most of the issues identified in the last report. Procedures to check on pupils' standards and progress are much improved and the curriculum for ICT now meets statutory requirements. Although standards have improved in this subject, some areas are still below those typical of pupils' ages in Years 6 and 7. The quality of teaching in the school is better but standards in physical education throughout the school are not as good as those reported at the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	D	B	A
mathematics	C	B	B	A
science	D	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 are achieving very well, compared with their standards when they enter the school, because of good teaching. The school is doing exceptionally well for its pupils compared with those in similar schools, particularly when the high number of pupils from homes where English is not the main language spoken and an above proportion of pupils with special educational needs are taken into account. In addition, the year groups are not stable as they move through the school. For example, the Year 6 mentioned above contained less than 65 per cent of the same pupils when they took the national tests in 1999. In the current Year 6, standards in English and science broadly match those for pupils' ages and are above those expected in mathematics. In Year 7, standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Twenty-one pupils who took the national tests in 2003 left the school before entering Year 7; approximately two-thirds of these had reached the higher Level 5. Standards are also above those expected in religious education in Year 6 and these pupils are achieving very well, and match those expected in Year 7.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed extremely well. Pupils behave well and are very keen to learn. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides good quality education for its pupils. In general, **teaching is good** and most pupils learn well. In Year 6, teaching is very good in English and mathematics and pupils are learning very well. In Year 7, teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in English, science and ICT. Although in the physical education lessons seen in Years 4 to 6 teaching was satisfactory overall and on occasion good, it was unsatisfactory in Year 7 and is judged to be unsatisfactory in this subject because pupils have not made sufficient progress over time, and learning is therefore not good enough. Teachers check on their pupils' progress well, although the quality of their comments when marking is not consistent enough.

The school offers a good curriculum to its pupils, including a broad range of out of school activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English is very good; these pupils are supported very well by both teachers and teaching assistants, and as a result they achieve very well. This outstandingly caring school enables pupils to be fully confident when approaching staff to share their opinions, ideas and concerns. The very good links with parents enable them to be well informed to help their children at home.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership is excellent; she has a very clear vision that inspires her staff and leads by example. She is supported very well by her very able deputy head and other senior staff who lead their areas of responsibility very effectively. The management of the school is very good with the emphasis being on bringing about improvements to help pupils' learning. The governors both support and challenge the school well, and fulfil their legal responsibilities effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very highly of the school and are particularly pleased with the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching, the range of activities outside school and the leadership and management of the headteacher. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and like the way everyone values the religious and cultural backgrounds of all groups of pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards in physical education across the school;
- ensure all of teachers' marking is up to the level of the best;
- improve pupils' standards in ICT in Year 6 and 7 and ensure the technology is used across the curriculum to help pupils learn; and
- ensure the governing body has clear plans to reduce the budgetary surplus.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Compared with their knowledge, understanding and skills when they join the school in Year 4, pupils are achieving very well in Year 6 and are doing well in Year 7, in English, science and religious education. Although standards in mathematics in Year 6 are above average, they are below the standards expected in information and communication technology and in physical education throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs, those whose families speak a language other than English at home, including refugees and asylum seekers and the few pupils from travellers' families, are integrated well and are generally achieving as well as their peers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- standards are in line with those expected in English and science and are above those expected in mathematics;
- in Year 6, pupils are prepared very well for National Curriculum tests and achieve high standards at the end of the year;
- pupils with learning needs, those in the early stages of acquiring English, and Traveller children are achieving very well;
- standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection, but are still below expected standards in Years 6 and 7 in some aspects; and
- in physical education, standards are below those typical for pupils' ages throughout the school.

Commentary

1. Pupils are achieving very well in Year 6 compared with their prior attainment when they entered the school and are achieving well in Year 7. Although attainment on entry varies, it tends to be low. For example when the pupils currently in Year 6 took their National Curriculum tests in Year 2 in 2000, their standards were well below average in reading, were in line in writing and were below in mathematics. In comparison, the current Year 4's results in 2002 were similar, being well below the national average in reading and mathematics and in line in writing. Although the standards of pupils' work in English and science broadly match those expected they are not as high as the latest 2003 test results would suggest. In mathematics, standards are higher and are broadly reflect the recent test results. Pupils are achieving very well in Year 6 because of the high quality of teaching and its positive effect on pupils' learning.
2. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected in Years 6 and 7. Pupils make good progress in these aspects as they move through the school as a result of the opportunities teachers give their pupils to develop these skills, not only in lessons but in other settings such as assemblies, where older pupils talk confidently to the whole school. Many, but not all pupils are enthusiastic readers in Years 6 and 7. They read at levels appropriate for their ages although higher-attaining pupils read fluently and with expression. Although the general standard of pupils' written work is typical for pupils' ages in Years 6 and 7, many pupils use language well in their writing, particularly when describing events. In mathematics in Year 6, pupils have good numeracy skills and are confident when calculating mentally. Pupils are benefiting from the setting arrangements in mathematics. In Year 7, these skills are less marked but are appropriate for pupils' ages. Standards in science in Years 6 and 7 are typical of those expected and there is appropriate emphasis and understanding of the process of scientific enquiry. In religious education standards broadly exceed the expectations of the agreed syllabus in Year 6 and match them in Year 7.
3. The table below shows that pupils are achieving very well in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, they are achieving well above average in all three subjects. Compared with their test results when they were in Year 2, they

have made very good progress. Work seen during the inspection, both in pupils' books and in lessons, and their rate of progress suggest there is every indication to support the school's view that similar results are likely next year. This is particularly so, given the intensive preparation for the tests that includes Booster classes in Year 6, run by the head and deputy headteacher in the Spring term. It might have been expected that standards in Year 7 would be higher, given the good results they achieved in Year 6. Such an assumption overlooks the high rate of pupil mobility that occurs at the end of Year 6. For example, of the 75 pupils in the Year 6 cohort, 21 moved to schools in other Local Education Authorities and some to the independent at age 11. Of these, 14 achieved the higher level 5 in English and science and 12 achieved this level in mathematics. In addition during the inspection there were ten pupils who had joined the school recently and were in Year 7. Although four of these had achieved Level 5 in the national tests, the remainder were working within the region of Level 3. In general, parents are happy that their children are doing their best.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (25.9)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (27.4)	27.0 (26.7)
science	29.5 (29.1)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 75 pupils in the year group but 73 pupils took the tests as two pupils who had only been in the country a short time were disappointed from taking the tests. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups in the early stages of learning English, including refugees, and the few children from Traveller families are very well supported throughout the school. As a result, they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress overall as they move through the school. All these groups of pupils make very good progress because the curriculum for these pupils is matched very well to their needs and is enhanced by good quality teaching and learning overall, with very good teaching in Year 6.
5. The improvements in the provision for information and communication technology are substantial. At the last inspection, pupils' skills were reported as being underdeveloped and some aspects of the subject were hardly taught at all, to the extent that statutory requirements were not being met. Although standards are improving, the new measures introduced to bring these about, including improvements to teaching, have not yet had time to raise standards to the expected levels in all areas in Years 6 and 7. In physical education, not enough has been done to raise standards. Dance, for example, still remains an issue, and in games, pupils' catching and throwing skills are below the standard expected for pupils' ages. Generally over time, there has been insufficient emphasis on the development of pupils' skills, leading to unsatisfactory standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes toward learning. They behave well and work very hard. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development, with strong emphasis being made on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are punctual and their attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- pupils consistently work hard to meet the high expectations set for them;
- personal development is very good and pupils flourish in this supportive and stimulating school environment;
- excellent racial harmony contributes significantly to the very good relationships in school;
- pupils are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs and value very highly the multi-cultural richness of their school community; and
- attendance is satisfactory but despite the school's best efforts to promote attendance, some families continue to take holidays during term time.

Commentary

6. As at the last inspection, pupils have very positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards their work. They respond very well to all that the school has to offer. In lessons, they are attentive and ask and answer questions readily. They listen very carefully to adults and to each other and this courtesy helps to build confidence among pupils who are learning English. Pupils are highly motivated and when asked to work in groups or independently they do so successfully. Pupils share equipment, discuss ideas and concentrate hard. Pupils from the Travellers' Community participate fully and productively in learning activities.
7. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is good and in lessons it is often very good. During assemblies, pupils are very attentive, respectful and behave in an exemplary manner. Parents are very pleased with the quality of behaviour in school. The school's positive approach to discipline is effective. Staff members apply the rules fairly and consistently and as a result, pupils are sure of what is expected of them. Behaviour on the playground is good; it is energetic but friendly. Occasionally, boisterous play gets too rough and the school is adamant about eliminating play fights. Pupils who misbehave are corrected quickly and given the chance to reflect about what went wrong and how they can improve. Bullying is a rare occurrence and the school is pro-active in preventing and eliminating it. Pupils engaged as playground buddies and the 'bully ballot' have made outdoor play sessions more enjoyable. The student council and the buddies have produced a helpful behaviour booklet for the school.
8. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The school's excellent ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils are interested in each other's backgrounds and relationships are very good. Their study of the world's faiths in religious education lessons enables them to compare and contrast different traditions and beliefs. Very high quality assemblies provide a forum for pupils to explore important issues such as xenophobia and empathise with others facing challenges such as racial discrimination and injustice. Adults are very good role models and pupils clearly know right from wrong. They are trusted and pupils' sensible behaviour contributes to the pleasant running of the school day. Pupils grow in maturity as they progress through the school. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate empathy and sensitivity, and an awareness of moral implications involved for Cameron, a boy about to receive a transplant heart from a pig. One pupil writes, *"I think the story is quite emotional and could upset someone who is sensitive"*. Another pupil whose home language is not English writes, *"Why is my heart like this when everyone else seems to have a good heart?"*.
9. There are many opportunities to display leadership and the house captains, sports captains, monitors, and school councillors all take their roles seriously. The school welcomes their views and suggestions from the school council were used to help improve the playground.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.9
National data	6.0

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.01
National data	0.3

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

10. Pupils are prompt, attendance broadly matches the national median and there is hardly any unauthorised absence. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection but attendance has not. Attendance would be better if families refrained from taking extended holidays to their native countries during term-time.

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	12	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	10	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	135	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	16	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	38	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	0	0
Black or Black British – African	21	0	0
Black or Black British - any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

11. The four fixed exclusions above involved two pupils. The issues that gave rise to the exclusions have been resolved.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

In general the school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching varies but is good overall. As a result most pupils learn well. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 7. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities. Provision for pupils with special

educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and the few from the Travellers Community is very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in Years 4 and 5, is very good in Year 6, and is satisfactory in Year 7. As a result, pupils generally learn well and enjoy learning. There are good procedures for checking on and recording pupils' progress and this information is used well in planning their future work.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- most teachers plan their lessons well and ensure their pupils are aware of what they are to learn and as a result, pupils are generally interested in and enjoy what they are learning;
- most teachers have good subject knowledge but some teachers lack confidence in physical education;
- teachers manage their classes well and work effectively with the teaching assistants; all have good relationships with their pupils;
- all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and Travellers' families, are supported very well;
- the good procedures for checking on and recording pupils' progress include tracking their attainment over time; and
- although some teachers' marking is good, much of it is too inconsistent to show pupils the way to improve their work.

Commentary

12. The table below shows the spread of the quality of teaching seen throughout the school. Although teaching is satisfactory in Year 7, its quality tends to fluctuate significantly and ranges from very good in a quarter of lessons seen in this year group to unsatisfactory in the same proportion. In Year 6, not all lessons were judged to be very good but the majority were, and none were judged to be less than good. As a result, pupils are learning very well in this year group and the high quality of teaching is the prime reason why pupils are achieving so highly. The headteacher has very effective procedures in place for checking systematically on the quality of teaching. There is much more high quality teaching than there was during the last inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (25.5%)	19 (44%)	11 (25.5%)	2 (5%)	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.

13. Most teachers plan their lesson well. At the beginning of the lessons, they set out clearly what it is they intend to teach and what they expect their pupils to learn, and usually reinforce what they have said by displaying the lesson objectives on the whiteboard. Many lessons follow the structure of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and include a clear exposition, group work to test pupils' understanding and knowledge, followed by a final session to test their learning and to summarise the session. Most teachers use their planning flexibly when, for example, as a result of good questioning at the beginning of the lesson it becomes clear that not all of the class have sufficient understanding of some of the concepts upon which the bulk of the new learning was predicated. This occurred in a history lesson in Year 5 on the wives of Henry VIII, when it became clear to the teacher that the class needed to spend more time on why the king wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon before studying Anne Boleyn and Jane

Seymour. Most pupils are engaged in effective learning because lessons are generally interesting; they know what is expected of them and happily work well on their own or with a partner.

14. Most teachers are confident teaching the national strategies for literacy and numeracy because of their good subject knowledge. Teaching in English is good and is very good in Year 6. In mathematics, teaching is good overall, and some in Year 6 is very good. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics in Year 6 because of the good teaching and the setting arrangements that ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' needs. In both these subjects teachers use good questions to check on their pupils' levels of understanding. Most teachers are confident when teaching science and the quality of teaching in this subject is good. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good, particularly the teaching of basic skills. The teaching of religious education is also good; teachers follow the agreed syllabus closely and there is appropriate emphasis on an exploration of the major religious faiths in the world. The only other subject where there was sufficient evidence to make judgements about teaching is physical education. Although in most lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory, it was unsatisfactory in Year 7 and is unsatisfactory overall. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough to enable pupils' skills to develop at a satisfactory rate.
15. There is a good working atmosphere in all classes. All staff have good relationships with their pupils. Pupils respect teachers and teaching assistants alike, who in turn treat them with respect. Because the teachers and the strong team of teaching assistants spend a session each week planning together, they know what each has to do and therefore work effectively together. All teachers, supported effectively by teaching assistants, manage their classes well, as pupils are interested in what they are learning. As a result, they are free to concentrate on their pupils' learning rather than controlling behaviour. In a religious education lesson for example, a teaching assistant encouraged a child in Year 4 to put his hand up and answered a question confidently about vegetarianism and another pupil with special educational needs talked clearly about why most Muslims do not eat pork.
16. Support teachers, such as the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs and the teacher with lead responsibility for minority ethnic achievement, make a very good contribution to enable these pupils to learn very well. Pupils are given very effective support in both classes and in withdrawal groups. Pupils with a behavioural component to their needs are particularly well supported. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are very well supported and also make very good progress. However, support is not confined to the achievement of minority ethnic groups unfamiliar with English, as effective support is also given to other individuals from minority ethnic groups to ensure they achieve to their full potential. In addition to the lead teacher with responsibility for minority ethnic achievement, all teachers and support staff play their part in lessons to ensure these pupils are included fully in all learning activities. In an English lesson in Year 7, for example, a pupil learning English as a second language and also having special educational needs made very good progress as he conducted his role as chairperson in a class debate about the pros and cons of school and home education. The school is successful in raising the achievement of the few children from Traveller families because it is mindful of their individual needs and tailors the programme of work to suit them. One child, new to the school was being successfully integrated on a part-time basis, by being given individual tuition, having failed to attend his previous school for about 18 months.
17. The good procedures for checking on and recording pupils' progress are a significant improvement since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Some teachers' marking is good and challenges and reinforces their pupils' learning, but not all of it is up to this standard and some opportunities to help pupils improve their work are not taken. Generally, however, teachers know their pupils well and keep detailed records of their progress. There are very good systems to check on the progress of pupils with learning needs or those learning English as a second language. The school makes very good use of these systems to provide additional support for pupils identified. Individual education plans are good and identify clear

targets that are explicit and achievable. There are regular reviews to assess progress and examine the appropriateness of the current support. Parents and pupils are appropriately involved and pupils are encouraged to write their own targets.

The curriculum

In general, curriculum provision is good and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by a broad range of visits and visitors and out-of-school activities enrich the provision. The quality of accommodation and resources is good and they are used well in helping pupils learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, but there are weaknesses in some subject areas;
- there is very good provision for pupils with learning needs of all kinds;
- although accommodation and resources are good, information and communication technology is not used enough in other subjects to help pupils in their learning;
- pupils are prepared well for the later stages of their education; and
- out-of-school activities are good.

Commentary

18. The school has made good progress in developing the curriculum areas of religious education and information and communication technology identified in the previous inspection report. The computer suite has been updated and national guidelines and planning have been adopted for all curriculum areas. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used very effectively to teach English and mathematics and the school follows national guidelines for most subject areas. All subject co-ordinators have time away from teaching to monitor subject areas and this ensures all curriculum areas are developing well. In addition to English and mathematics, strengths of the curriculum include science and religious education. Subjects that need further development include physical education and French. The French programme being taught in Year 7 during the inspection, for example, is pitched at too high a level as it assumes a level of knowledge these pupils do not have. The school has already identified these areas and measures are in place to improve the curriculum provision and raise standards in these areas. The quality of planning is good and links between most subject areas are identified clearly. Although information and communication technology is well used in English, it needs to be more consistently used across other curriculum areas. Assemblies are extremely well planned and enrich pupils' personal development.
19. The school makes very good provision to ensure all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity, have equal access to the opportunities provided. Inclusion is a high priority within the school and is a clear strength. All pupils are included and appreciated and the school is part of the local area inclusion project. It participates in Black History Month and works closely with the local police and schools. It is therefore no surprise that the provision for pupils with special educational needs, Traveller pupils and those with English as a second language is very good. The school targets support effectively in most subject areas and reviews it regularly according to the pupils' needs. There are some computer programs for pupils with visual impairment but more extensive use of computers to enrich work for pupils with special needs would be of benefit to these pupils.
20. The good accommodation includes a well-equipped technology suite and the school is successfully developing the library area and has plans to develop it further. The classrooms are a good size and provide an attractive learning environment. Resources are generally plentiful, the most important, after the teaching staff, being the range of support staff that is matched well to the curriculum. The school and grounds are very clean and well cared for, contributing to the quality of the learning environment. The library is rather small for the size of the school and is not large enough for a class to work in.

21. There are very good links with the first and high school and staff work closely with those in both schools. By the time pupils transfer at the end of Year 7, pupils know key staff in the secondary school for French, ICT and science. There are regular visits by both the pupils and staff.
22. The good range of activities outside the school day includes a mathematics and photography club and provision for cricket, football and information and communication technology. Pupils take part in the Harrow Arts weekend local music festivals. Opportunities are seized for whole school trips; for example, the whole school visited 'Bombay Dreams'. Teaching assistants run a 'Friendship Club'. There is also an annual visit to Northern France for pupils in Year 7 to practise and improve their language skills. The booster and additional literacy sessions are most successful, helping pupils achieve very good standards against their prior attainment.

Care, guidance and support

There are excellent arrangements to provide the highest level of care, welfare and health and safety. Pupils are supported very well. The headteacher leads by example and ensures that pupils are confident in approaching staff members to share their opinions, ideas and concerns.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- excellent procedures are followed to ensure a safe and supportive school day;
- a very caring environment ensures pupils are very highly valued and their individual needs are identified and addressed; and
- pupils' ideas are highly valued and they are fully involved in the life of the school.

Commentary

23. This is a vibrant, welcoming school where pupils are very happy. The school day is well planned and risk assessments of the site are completed each term with governors monitoring remedial action effectively. The dedicated team of welfare assistants is based in the medical room and deliver first aid as well as special care for pupils with specific medical needs. The headteacher holds responsibility for child protection and is supported well by the deputy headteacher. Arrangements regarding child protection are very good and have improved since the last inspection. All members of staff are regularly updated about procedures in this area and are sure of their roles. There are close links with outside agencies such as social services who are called upon as necessary.
24. The first-rate levels of care are based upon the very good relationships within the school and mutual trust between pupils and their teachers and teaching assistants. Staff members have very good knowledge of pupils' academic and personal development and this provides an informed basis for support and guidance. The school is fully aware that some pupils come from unsettled parts of the world or have other demands in their lives. However, there are no barriers to the high levels of expectation set for pupils regarding their achievement and their participation in school life. Pupils who have difficulties forming friendships are discreetly supported within social skills groups. They discuss issues that are important to them in Circle Time (*when pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues and all pupils respect each other's views*) and those who prefer to write about their concerns make entries in their classroom's 'Think Books'. In a book made available to them outside the office, pupils sensitively express their concerns about the conflict in the Middle East. The school's very high levels of care are illustrated by the excellent arrangements for pupils transferring into Year 4 and take into account all areas of school life. Pupils are very pleased with the welcome they receive upon entering school and this extends to those entering at different times of the year.
25. In partnership with pupils and parents, the school has responded to the problems and concerns expressed concerning packed lunches being consumed by pupils in their

classrooms, in the absence of cooked meals being provided. The school is keen to provide nutritious hot lunches served in a sociable dining hall. The necessary arrangements are being finalised and this provision is set to be introduced next term.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good and effective links with parents who are very pleased with the work of the school. Links with the community are good and are very good with the first school and the local high school to which most pupils transfer.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- parents are enthusiastic supporters of the school and help to raise its profile in the community;
- the quality of information given to parents about their children and school events is very good;
- parents are actively involved in supporting pupils through the Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA); and
- good links with the community extend learning opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

26. The school enjoys the full confidence and support of its parents. They are viewed as a helpful resource and their opinions and ideas are valued by the school. Regular questionnaires and an open-door policy encourage parents to take an active role. The very good information given to parents about all aspects of school life include the prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents and the end-of-year reports. These contain all of the statutory information required in a parent-friendly and attractive format. In response to parents' requests, the end of year report has been improved and now gives very clear information about how well each pupil has done in each subject and what he or she needs to do to improve. The home-school partnership agreement is completed when pupils first enter school. Parents' views are sought regularly so the school can gauge their approval on different aspects of school life. For example, consultations helped to shape the school's decision to introduce hot lunches from next term. The school takes great care to meet the needs of parents who do not speak English or who are reluctant to approach them directly. Many school documents are distributed in other languages. Translation services are secured from members of staff, other parents and older pupils as well as professionals from the local authority.
27. The PTFA is led by a committed group of volunteers who organise social and fundraising events throughout the year. The Summer Fair is well supported by parents, teachers and the local community. Parents volunteer to help in school, mainly with reading. The diverse backgrounds of families help to extend learning opportunities for all pupils very well. Some parents read to pupils in their native languages. International Week gives pupils and other parents first-hand insight into different customs, foods and traditions, volunteering in lessons and on special occasions and by supporting homework.
28. The good community links provide pupils with a wide range of visitors and visits to enrich the curriculum and support their development. The school also maintains a productive link with the Kodak Company, one of the local employers. Pupils in Years 5 and 7 use the company's equipment and submit their photographs in an annual competition. Pupils' creative skills, sense of teamwork and knowledge of technology are extended and they have won first place every time they have participated. Parents are made very welcome in the school, and classes for parents in English, information technology and mathematics take place within the school building. Parents are improving their skills and this helps to support learning for their children at home.
29. Very good links with the first school enable the excellent induction to take place for new pupils at Year 4. Older pupils benefit from the link with the high school during their transition from

Year 7. This very good relationship also provides them with specialist equipment to help in lessons that include information and communication technology and science equipment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the school is very well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and her senior staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, support her very well. The management of the school is very good with very effective performance management procedures in place to bring about improvement. The governing body works effectively to support the school and is well informed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the headteacher has a very clear vision that she shares very effectively with all her staff;
- she is highly committed to ensuring the needs of all groups of pupils are met well, and that they achieve to their full capacity;
- there is a rigorous monitoring policy in place;
- teachers with management responsibilities lead their areas very well; and
- although the governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, there is a much higher than usual under-spend in the budget.

Commentary

30. The headteacher's very clear vision includes a commitment to continuous learning for all children and adults, and for pupils' standards in the National Curriculum tests to exceed both the national and local authority average. Both these objectives have been achieved, but when the headteacher was first appointed less than three years ago, it was not the case that all staff shared a vision of continuous learning for all pupils. This was because a significant proportion of staff were complacent about pupil achievement and used the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language in the school and those with special educational needs as an excuse for not stretching them to fulfil their potential. As a result of her excellent leadership and clear-sighted vision, she has challenged and changed the culture of the school. Those not willing to share her vision have left. As a result, staffing is now very stable and the staff work together as a cohesive team.
31. The main thrust of her vision therefore is to provide *'effective access to learning and achievement by identifying individual learning needs and the teaching methods and learning strategies necessary to support all children effectively'*. With at least 25 languages spoken in the school and about 97 per cent of children from minority ethnic groups, the objective to value and celebrate diversity by promoting inclusion for all is both very prominent and relevant. The school is highly committed to meeting the needs of all pupils: *"Inclusion underpins everything"*. One of the recent innovations to emphasise the school's commitment to this is the recent decision for the special educational needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for ethnic minority achievement to work closely together. Already some of the results of this decision are clear to see. Children who are in the early stages of acquiring English are given an individual education plan and there is now an inclusion file available to all class teachers and teaching assistants that replaces the separate files for special needs and English as an additional language. The progress of all these pupils is closely monitored and support deployed appropriately. Children from families of Travellers, who bring their own unique needs to the school, are very sensitively supported and are achieving very well.
32. The headteacher has a very clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning and as a result has put in place a rigorous monitoring policy to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' standards have continued to rise since her appointment. Although there is room for further improvement, its success so far can be judged by the proportion of very good teaching observed during the inspection which was twice that reported in the last inspection. In her first year, the headteacher was involved in the review of the performance of every teacher. Now year group leaders are empowered to review the performance of their colleagues in their year

group. The targets for performance management are linked to those in the clear school improvement plan.

33. The headteacher manages all her staff very well and invests a great deal of time in team-building. As a result, she has been very successful in forming a strong team that has high staff morale. She is not afraid to delegate responsibilities and works very effectively with her deputy head who complements the strengths of the headteacher very well and fulfils this role very effectively. She is particularly strong in the area of assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and their progress. The co-ordinator for special educational needs combines this role with that of deputy head and manages this aspect very well. She has been particularly successful in persuading class teachers to take prime responsibility for these pupils, with her role being supportive and supplementary to theirs. In addition to this aspect and the management of the achievement of ethnic minority groups, which is also very good, most of the subjects that were the focus of inspection are well managed. English, mathematics and religious education are very well managed and the management of information and communication technology is good. The co-ordinator for physical education has only recently been appointed and although it is too early to make judgements, he has made a good start in the post. The co-ordinators are given time to monitor attainment and the quality of teaching to raise standards further.
34. Although the school finds it difficult to attract a full complement of governors, the regular members of the governing body share the headteacher's vision, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very supportive. For example, they provide additional resources to help pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English. However, they do not do so without calling the school to account. For example, they check carefully on the National Curriculum test results to see how the school is doing in relation to both national and local authority results, and also check on the impact the new technology suite has made on pupils' standards. The chair of governors is new to the post but is committed and knows the school well. Although small, the governing body has an appropriate structure to ensure it fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,168,199	Balance from previous year	160,422
Total expenditure	993,956	Balance carried forward to the next	174,243
Expenditure per pupil	3,512		

35. However, it has recently built up a surplus in the budget of about 15 per cent, which is way beyond what is considered a prudent reserve for contingencies. As the table above makes clear, the carry-forward into this financial year is well over £170,000. A large part of these funds was accumulated to pay for the conversion of the former kitchen area into classrooms, which in the event was not needed as the conversion was paid for jointly by an independent trust and the Local Authority. There are plans to spend some of this surplus but they are not entirely clear. A prudent surplus is necessary, particularly to cover the variation in pupils numbers that arises at transfer to Year 7, but these funds are allocated for the benefit of pupils at the school at the time. Such a large surplus represents an unsatisfactory aspect of financial practice.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- groups of pupils of all attainment levels achieve very well by the end of Year 6 and are achieving well in Year 7;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with very good teaching and learning in Year 6;
- teachers check on their pupils' progress very well; and
- the subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

36. From a very low base when they enter the school, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well as they move through the school. Pupils achieve standards in national tests that are above average by the age of 11 and are well above average compared with similar schools. During the inspection, standards were typical of those achieved by pupils of a similar age in speaking and listening, reading and writing in Years 6 and Year 7. Inspection finds that the school is justified in its confidence that it is on course to enable pupils to achieve similar high results as previous years because of the very good quality of teaching and learning in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, those in the early stages of acquiring English and the few children from the Traveller community are very well supported and consequently make the same rate of progress as their peers. During inspection there was no significant difference between the work of boys and girls. Standards have continued to rise steadily in recent years and have improved very well since the last inspection.
37. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons and other settings such as assemblies. In a religious education lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils developed their confidence and competence in these skills as a result of the teacher's good questioning. Pupils were encouraged to explain the significance of different foods used in various religious festivals and talked confidently about their own religious celebrations such as Eid, Diwali, and Christmas. In a lesson in one of the classes in Year 6, pupils were challenged to consider the feelings of a boy needing a heart transplant and talked clearly about the implications of someone being ill in the family. They were able to articulate a personal response to the text 'Pig Heart'. The more able pupils are already achieving standards above those typical for pupils of this age in this aspect of their work. In Year 7, pupils learn to present a formal debate and use appropriate English to communicate their views.
38. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in their reading. In Year 6, pupils are confident readers because the teachers promote skills very well and have a very good command of the subject. All classes have a daily group reading session. These sessions are very well organised and help to raise standards in reading and promote the enjoyment of books. In writing, the standards typical of pupils in Years 6 and 7 are the result of good teaching overall, and very good teaching in Year 6. Throughout the school, writing targets are clearly identified. Pupils are encouraged to write in an interesting way and to take account of the different audiences for whom they are writing. From the time when pupils enter the school, they are encouraged to enliven their writing with rich language. For example, a pupil in Year 4 wrote a poem about Grandma: *"Her hair is like golden wires and her eyes are like crystal balls"*. In Year 6, pupils use complex sentences and use punctuation well in their report-writing. A pupil described as of average attainment wrote: *"The way the lion devoured him; it ate everything in and on him in*

such a gruesome manner". Pupils in Year 7 use description well in their paragraphs. A more able pupil wrote: *"As you enter the floor creaks at every step. The house is not the kind of cosy house; it is dirty, damp, and dull. The wallpaper is brown and peeling off windows hardly transparent, spider webs and scuttling beetles"*.

39. Teachers have very good knowledge and are confident teaching the subject. In English, the marking of pupils' work is good and in Year 6 is very good. It challenges and reinforces learning effectively and pupils respond well to this. Lessons proceed at a very good pace and pupils are consistently and sensitively challenged through the very effective use of questioning. The learning intention is identified clearly and reinforced at the end of lessons. Procedures for checking on pupils' standards are very good and the school has successfully implemented a tracking system to follow and record their progress. These procedures enable how well pupils are doing to be carefully monitored over time and any dip in progress can be identified early and support systems put in place to ensure progress is back on course.
40. The co-ordinator's leadership of English is very good and she manages the subject effectively. She is experienced and knowledgeable and has a clear view of the strengths of the subject. This is partly as a result of the rigorous monitoring procedures that are undertaken on a termly basis through classroom observation and an examination of the quality of pupils' work. The school has worked hard to make the best possible use of the library area but it is small for the needs of the school. There are well considered plans for extending the library provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Literacy is used very well in many subjects across the curriculum and in these, pupils' writing and reading skills and vocabulary are extended well. In Year 6 in geography, pupils write extensively about rivers and mountains and in religious education, they write effectively about the Exodus and the Ten Commandments. In science, vocabulary is used well. Literacy is used well in history. When studying evacuation during the Second World War, a pupil in Year 6, wrote plaintively to her parents as a recent evacuee: *"I was so upset when I had to say goodbye to you last week"*.

Modern foreign language

French

42. The subject is taught in Year 7 by both class teachers. In addition, a French specialist from the local high school teaches Year 7 for an hour each week and also plans together with the teachers of this year group. It was only possible to sample a session lasting 20 minutes at the end of the day, linked to information and communication technology. There is therefore insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on pupils' standards and achievement or teaching and learning. In this brief session, the pupils were learning to count to ten in French and, on the computers, were using a CD-ROM with a program 'Route Nationale' which uses phrases such as 'Comment tu t'appelles?' and 'Où habites-tu?' The teachers, including the specialist, accept that this program is pitched at too high a level for complete beginners and have plans to introduce a new program more appropriate for newcomers to French.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**. Standards in mathematics are higher than those typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve very well by Year 6;
- the teaching of mathematics is good overall in Years 4 to 6, so that pupils have positive attitudes to their work and respond well to their teachers;
- good opportunities are made to involve pupils in applying their number skills in problem-solving and developing their mathematical vocabulary;
- the school provides well for pupils of differing abilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language; and
- the leadership and management of mathematics are very good and staff are well supported.

Commentary

43. Although pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards in their work and in national tests by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in Year 7 are in line with those expected for their age. This is partly because many of the pupils who did well in the tests left to go to schools in other authorities at the end of Year 6. Only one lesson was seen in this year group and teaching was satisfactory. The subject has improved well since the previous inspection. Standards dipped following the last inspection but have risen at a faster rate than those nationally and a steadily increasing number of pupils achieve the higher levels in the national tests. This is due to good teaching in Years 4 to 6 and the rigorous monitoring of the curriculum to identify what works well and where improvement is needed. Pupils have good number skills. They are confident in using a variety of methods to calculate mentally and when using pencil and paper methods. They are able to apply these skills successfully to different aspects of mathematics, for example when solving problems involving ratio. In one lesson in Year 6, pupils drew on their knowledge of using brackets when creating formulae for finding the perimeter of rectangles.
44. Although teaching and learning are good overall, some lessons are very good. Here, teachers set a brisk pace which is sustained throughout the session. They ask probing questions that challenge pupils' thinking, engage them well and encourage them to do their best. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good and reflect the good relationships between pupils and adults and the effective support provided. Pupils are well behaved in mathematics lessons, most work hard and concentrate well. They make good progress because teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and, for the most part, explain new work well, demonstrating effectively reliable methods of calculation.
45. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is developing well as a result of the strong emphasis teachers place on this aspect of their learning. Pupils are therefore developing well their ability to explain their thinking and are improving their understanding, so that they become more proficient in applying their number skills to a variety of mathematical problems. For example, pupils in Year 6 were challenged to identify different quadrilaterals by asking questions of the teacher and making deductions based on the information they had acquired. Pupils are given opportunities to carry out mathematical investigations, such as exploring if it is possible to make all the amounts of money between 1p and £1 using given coins. Such exercises challenge them to apply their skills practically in different contexts, including real-life problem-solving requiring two or more calculations, and develop well their thinking skills and understanding.
46. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and are well briefed, ensuring that they have a good understanding of what pupils are expected to do and learn. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons. Teachers and the teaching assistants build good relationships with the pupils who

are encouraged and helped to build their confidence, so that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils in the school. Work is, for the most part, well matched to pupils' different needs and abilities. This is because pupils' progress is tracked through each year so that teachers 'have their fingers on the pulse' of the progress each individual pupil is making. Although teachers' marking is satisfactory and is often helpful to pupils, it does not consistently provide them with information about how to improve their work.

47. The subject is very well led because of the strong focus on raising standards and the high aspirations the school has for its pupils. It sets demanding targets for standards to be achieved by the end of Year 6. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning very well through thorough analysis of test results and an extensive programme of lesson observations. These have given the school a very good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and of what works in teaching and where improvement is needed. The information is used effectively to target these areas for improvement and as a result, the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. There are appropriate examples of pupils using mathematical skills in science and ICT to record and present numerical information in graphs. Limited evidence suggests pupils' numeracy skills in that subjects such as design and technology, geography and history are less developed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils are achieving very well in Year 6 and well in Year 7;
- teaching is good overall; and
- resources are good but ICT is not used consistently to help pupils learn in the subject.

Commentary

49. Although the standards of work seen in pupils' books and in lessons in Year 6 show they are working at levels typical for pupils of similar age and reflect those reported at the last inspection, the most recent National Curriculum test results are much better than those from 1997, published in the last report. For example, the results in those tests showed the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels matched the national average but were below the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels. In the most recent tests, pupils achieved very well, attaining standards above the national average, while more pupils achieved higher levels as a proportion than is typical nationally. Work in the books of pupils in Year 6 shows that above average pupils have good understanding of the areas of study covered since the beginning of term, including the functions of the parts of a plant and photosynthesis; *"Sunlight from the sun, water from the ground and carbon dioxide from the air are used by the leaf to make food for the plant"*. Their experiments with watercress, as written up, indicate a good understanding of the importance of collecting evidence through observation and the need to ask relevant questions. The work in the books of pupils described as 'average' and 'below average' is similar in range to that of above average pupils and shows they are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Many of these pupils have special educational needs and the vast majority of these pupils are from minority ethnic groups, where a language other than English is their main one. In Year 7, the work in the books of above average pupils shows good handling of data in devising a table to show the similarities and differences between the facial characteristics of members of the class. On occasion, the

work of average pupils is impaired by writing which is grammatically incorrect, and below average pupils, although achieving well, are not producing work of sufficient quantity.

50. In lessons observed in two of the three classes in Year 6, pupils showed confidence in planning and carrying out a fair test, having made predictions about what would happen when different solids such as sugar, flour, sand and salt are mixed with water. Most pupils understood and were able to explain the importance of fair testing and keeping most variables constant in their scientific enquiry investigations. In a lesson observed in Year 7, pupils showed reasonable confidence and familiarity when making suggestions about the main characteristics of 'acid'. They were able to say that acid could be hazardous and were able to identify household items that could be harmful such as bleach and car battery acid, and others that were not in themselves harmful such as vinegar and citric acid.
51. Of the five lessons observed, teaching was good in four lessons and was satisfactory in the other. There are a number of positive features in the teaching that enable pupils generally to learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident teaching the subject. Together with teaching assistants, they have very good relationships with their pupils and have mutual respect for each other. As a result, classes are well managed and pupils enjoy learning in a happy, productive atmosphere that is also busy because of the teachers' lively approach. Teachers are mindful of the potential dangers when handling science equipment and constantly emphasise to their pupils the need to be aware of health and safety. In one class in Year 4, where pupils were given thermometers to measure temperature, the teacher asked, "*What happens if you break a thermometer?*". There then followed a brief reminder that if, in the unlikely event a thermometer became broken, the pupils were not to touch it but were to call the teacher. Teachers emphasise the need to use appropriate technical vocabulary whenever possible. As a result, many pupils in Year 6 were confident using terms such as 'factors', 'variables' and 'particles'. The needs of all pupils are taken account of very well, including those with SEN and those from ethnic minority groups in the early stages of learning English. In response, they feel valued and show positive attitudes. In one class, a pupil from a Traveller family was so well integrated and involved in the lesson that the inspector had to ask for the child to be pointed out.
52. The good resources are the result of extra funding that the school has committed to ensure standards remain high. The school also benefits from the close relationships that it enjoys with the local high school that frequently loans equipment to ensure that the curriculum for Year 7 meets national requirements. However, information and communication technology is not used very much to help pupils learn in science. In the demountable classroom that is used as a laboratory for both Years 6 and 7, for example, there is no computer in the room.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- leadership of the subject is good;
- the refurbished suite is used well to teach computer skills to whole classes and standards are improving, although pupils lack experience in the use of remote sensing and control; and
- good teaching and well-designed lessons, based on an effective programme of skills teaching, interest and motivate pupils.

Commentary

53. The quality of provision has improved substantially since the last inspection. The bank of replacement computers in the suite provide an up-to-date and reliable resource, enabling all aspects of the curriculum to be covered. Because the subject is well led, positive and effective action has been taken to improve provision and raise standards, and good support has been

given to staff. As a result, the overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good and in lessons, pupils learn well. Although standards are rising, there has not been sufficient time for these measures to impact on all areas of the technology curriculum, such as how computers can sense changes in materials and control devices and by Year 6, pupils' standards are below expectations for their age and there are still some gaps in the knowledge and skills of pupils in Year 7. However, in some aspects of the curriculum, such as word-processing, use of computers for research and use of spreadsheets to carry out calculations, pupils achieve expected standards. For example, in Year 7, pupils make use of desktop publishing programs and create web pages to promote their school, such as 'My fab school'. In Year 6, pupils make good use of the Internet to find information about mountains to support their learning in geography. They use a multimedia-authoring program confidently to organise, refine and present a set of linked multimedia pages about the subject. Although standards are below those expected in Years 6 and 7, taking into account all aspects of the subject in these year groups, they are achieving satisfactorily against their prior attainment.

54. Because of the good support given to teachers since the last inspection, they now have the skills and confidence they need to teach the curriculum successfully. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who respond very well. They listen carefully, concentrate on their work, and work sensibly with their computer partner. They are willing to use trial and improvement methods when things do not go according to plan and often manage to solve problems themselves. Lessons are well planned to interest pupils and begin with direct teaching, so that pupils know what to do when they arrive in the technology suite. The good teaching of basic skills ensures that for the most part, pupils quickly become familiar with the programs. Teachers plan lessons to cover a wide range of skills through interesting topics. Both teachers and teaching assistants, effectively help pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they achieve as well as other pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Although there is some use of the technology in subjects such as religious education and geography, where pupils have researched information on the Internet in religious education and have presented data in geography, generally it is not used enough. Pupils are becoming increasingly equipped with skills that they could use in other subjects, but opportunities are missed to plan for a more extensive use of information technology to boost skills in many subjects, especially mathematics.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in geography and history, with insufficient lessons or work in pupils' books being seen to draw overall conclusions about standards and achievement or teaching and learning. In geography, very little work was available in pupils' books. In history, there was more work in pupils' books, but less than that normally found. However, what was available in the books of pupils in Years 6 and 7 was broadly typical of those achieved by pupils of a similar age.

Geography

Two lessons were observed. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 5, pupils were achieving standards below those typical for pupils' ages, although learning was satisfactory when they were sharing and gaining knowledge about rivers and their features. Some pupils were unsure of the origins of rivers and pointed to rain or the ocean as the main sources. Higher-attaining pupils were able to say they originated in mountains. The teacher valued the pupils' opinions and led the discussion appropriately. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils made very good progress in their learning of how mountain chains are formed and were achieving well. Pupils showed very good attitudes to learning in this lesson as a result of the very good teaching where the teacher made very good use of limited resources, focused very strongly on developing subject vocabulary (for example, the difference

between erosion and corrosion) and provided a high level of challenge for her pupils. As a result, pupils were achieving standards typical for pupils of this age.

History

In a satisfactory lesson in Year 5, pupils were studying the reasons for the marriages of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour. Learning was better in the first half of the lesson where pupils were keen to answer the teacher's good questioning. Their writing skills were not up to the same standard and most pupils took too much time to complete their written tasks. Teaching was satisfactory but, in an otherwise well planned lesson, more could have been expected of the pupils in less time if the tasks had been more appropriately matched.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- teaching is good, overall;
- pupils are encouraged to learn about the beliefs and traditions of major world-faiths and apply this learning to living within the school and local community; and
- respect for diversity in beliefs is shown to each other by pupils and adults.

Commentary

56. Judgements are based on four lessons observed, together with an analysis of work in pupils' books since the beginning of term. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils are achieving very well and are achieving well in Year 7. Standards of attainment exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6 and match them in Year 7. Pupils enjoy their lessons. In general, standards have improved well since the last inspection.
57. The good teaching consists of a number of strong elements, including learning objectives being made clear at the beginning of lessons, good class management, careful questioning, very good relationships with pupils and effective use of resources. As a result, pupils are gaining a good understanding of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Discussions with pupils in all year groups indicate they link learning in religious education effectively with everyday life, such as knowing the traditions underlying the celebration of Diwali, and can interpret with their teacher extracts from the story of "The Sower" in St Mark's Gospel. Pupils are therefore given opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as facts.
58. The curriculum is planned so that there is a broad and balanced curriculum in which all religions are given equality, an important emphasis in a school where many religious faiths are represented. As a result, the quality of provision and the respect shown to religious education are making a very positive impact on the good relationships highly visible within the school between pupils, adults and parents, and with the school's local community. The subject is very well led.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were sampled both in art and design, and in design and technology and one was observed in music. Together with limited previous work available, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on pupils' standards or achievements. No judgement about the quality of provision in these subjects can be made.

Art and design

In a satisfactory lesson in Year 4, pupils achieved standards appropriate for their age in using lines, shapes, patterns and textures to describe some journeys made by Aboriginal artists. In this lesson, teaching was satisfactory and pupils had good attitudes to art and design. In a very good lesson in Year 7 taught by the co-ordinator, the pupils showed good understanding of art and design being a means of communication as she drew their attention to what they can learn from the examples of portraits she had laid on display. Pupils achieved well in this lesson and their standards were broadly typical for the age of the pupils. The leadership and management are good because the co-ordinator has the skills and time allocated to evaluate the curriculum and the quality of pupils' work and identify what should be improved. Teachers are beginning to gain confidence in teaching art and design because of the good support and good practice demonstrated by the co-ordinator, but the work available suggests there is some way to go. Pupils experience an appropriate range of media and use sketchbooks to develop their ideas, but these books are not yet used consistently to develop different skills and techniques or to provide a useful record of each individual pupil's progress.

Design and technology

In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils embarked on a new project – to make bread. They were working at acceptable levels in investigating and evaluating bread products according to their characteristics and were confident recording their observations after tasting different varieties of bread according to shape, colour, taste, smell and texture. In this lesson, pupils were achieving well. Teaching was good and pupils were learning well. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils were considering the various ways in which slippers are designed for the intended user and purpose. By the end of the lesson, all groups of pupils had satisfactory understanding that the construction and quality is dependent on the suitability of the footwear for its purpose. Teaching and learning were good as pupils achieved well. They had very good attitudes in this lesson. The subject is well led. Although only recently appointed to the role, the co-ordinator has evaluated the provision and has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and is aware that more emphasis should be placed on the development of pupils' skills.

Music

A specialist teacher teaches pupils for two days each week and planning ensures a balance of opportunities to develop the key musical skills of performing. A choir and instrumental tuition enhance the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in performances in school and in local community events, such as the Harrow Middle School Songfest. These contribute effectively to pupils' overall musical experience. In the lesson observed in a class in Year 6, teaching was satisfactory and pupils' singing was of a standard typical for their ages.

Physical education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- standards are below those expected throughout the school;
- the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Year 7; and
- the newly-appointed co-ordinator has made a good start leading the subject and has opportunities to monitor teaching and learning.

Commentary

59. The school is aware of the need to develop physical education and many initiatives have already been put in place to raise standards and the quality of teaching and learning. These

initiatives are fairly recent and have not had time to make an impact on standards. Standards have regressed since the last inspection.

60. Standards observed in all lessons during the inspection were below the level expected for pupils' ages. Pupils with English as a second language, Traveller and special educational needs pupils make the same rate of progress as their peers. In lessons in games, observed in Year 6 and 7, it is clear that skills have not been progressively developed as pupils move through the school. For example, pupils' ability to receive and pass a ball or a puck is below the standard expected. In Year 6 a significant number of pupils have not developed basic football skills such as kicking the ball with the side of their foot rather than their toes. In a small games session, pupils were not using the space as well as would be expected for pupils of this age. In Year 4, many pupils lack confidence and competence when meeting an incoming ball, and shield their body from the approaching ball rather than extend their arms and hands so as to balance and control. Although pupils swim each week for one term during their time in the school, no records were available to show the standards achieved.
61. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed in Year 6. In the good lesson, the teacher intervened appropriately and gave individuals clear teaching points to help them improve. The lesson had an appropriate balance of skill development and small games activities. However, so near the beginning of the year, this good teaching has not had time to have made sufficient impact. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 7 is unsatisfactory. A significant feature of this teaching is the inappropriate methods used for the age and stage of the pupils. Pupils were organised into a whole-class team game of uni-hoc (hockey using plastic sticks) that was inappropriate for pupils who do not have the skills, knowledge or understanding to cope with the complexities and demands of a large game. Similarly in a dance lesson, pupils were asked to create a rock and roll dance sequence before having been taught or learned the basic step patterns adequately. There are good links with science and most pupils understand the effect of exercise on their body.
62. In the two terms since he assumed responsibility for physical education, the co-ordinator has made a good start, ensuring that planning throughout the school now follows national guidelines. Extra-curricular clubs and activities have been established and are well attended. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning in athletics, cricket, football and rounders. The school is now also involved in inter-school competitive activities. Teachers are observed by the co-ordinator twice a term to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson was seen in personal, social and health education and no direct teaching of citizenship was observed but the school places great store on this area of it's work and it is a clear strength of the school. Provision is very good. Assemblies are used very powerfully to bring home the message that as citizens, pupils should not stand idly by or ignore injustices to others. In one excellent assembly, pupils explored the implications of racial tension and xenophobia. The theme was, 'To stand up for the rights of people'. The themes of racial discrimination and injustice based on narrow views of the world as implemented in Nazi Germany in the Second World War were contrasted with the stance of Martin Luther King and his dream that it will be recognised that all are created equal. Drama was used very effectively and those in this performance by pupils in Year 6 gave an outstanding contribution to the rest of the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as the whole school - the audience - listened spellbound in hushed concentration for twenty exceptional minutes and applauded spontaneously at the end.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).

