

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LAURANCE HAINES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117320

Headteacher: Mrs B Ridyard

Lead inspector: N A Pett

Dates of inspection: 24th - 26th November 2003

Inspection number: 258138

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 394 |
| School address: | Vicarage Road Watford |
| Postcode: | WD18 0DD |
| Telephone number: | (01923) 233146 |
| Fax number: | (01923) 219216 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Trevor Gillard |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 st June 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This school serves a well established housing area and a large more modern estate. It is much larger than the average primary school and has a dedicated Nursery on site. There is a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. About 59 per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic families and the proportion that have English as an additional language is high; a quarter of them are at an early stage of acquisition. A significant number of support staff are attached to the school to support these pupils. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, for a broad range of learning difficulties, is just above average. When children start school their skills, knowledge and understanding are below average for their age. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is above average. In 2003 the school was given a Schools Achievement Award and a Hertfordshire Quality Mark for the Nursery.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|---|
| 17331 | N A Pett | Lead inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 19557 | E Halls | Lay inspector | |
| 15011 | M Wallace | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage, physical education, religious education |
| 5862 | S Heaney | Team inspector | Mathematics, art and design, design and technology |
| 32181 | M Coles | Team inspector | Science, geography, history, special educational needs |
| 19774 | M Docherty | Team inspector | English, English as an additional language, music |

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|----------------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 4 - 6 |
| PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS | |
| STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS | 7 - 11 |
| Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | |
| QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL | 11 - 18 |
| Teaching and learning | |
| The curriculum | |
| Care, guidance and support | |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community | |
| LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | 18 - 20 |
| PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS | 21 - 37 |
| AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE | |
| SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 | |
| PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS | 38 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school which is working successfully in challenging circumstances. Its effective leadership, management and governance are initiating good developments which are raising standards from a low base level although they are still only average overall. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory and improving and, whilst results in 2002 National Curriculum tests are below average overall, they are adversely affected by the diversity found in the school population. Teaching is good overall and the school **gives good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good provision for the Foundation Stage.
- The very effective work of the support staff helps to raise standards for the many pupils, including those with English as an additional language and for those pupils with special educational needs.
- The very good inclusive ethos which is encouraging learning.
- The very good relationships between pupils and their good attitudes and behaviour.
- The good links with the community which enhance learning opportunities and relationships.
- The need to further develop the management roles of staff in their work as subject leaders.
- The need to improve the use of assessment to support the further raising of standards.
- The need to meet the statutory curriculum requirements for information and communication technology.

Since the last inspection in 1998, overall improvement has been good. There has been very good improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Standards have risen for pupils in Years 1 to 6 in the face of an increasing diversity in the school population. This is particularly so in English and with some progress in art and music. The overall approach to management, generated by changes in the senior staff, has done much good work to improve the curriculum framework and to utilise staff skills more coherently. The design of collective worship for a diverse range of cultures has been good so that statutory requirements are now met. However, improvement is still required for information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6; improving resources and teaching have the potential to address this shortcoming.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and continuing to improve which, when taking account of pupil mobility, the range of special educational needs and command of English, is a significant development. Standards for children in the Foundation Stage are effectively raised from being well below average on entry to average overall for the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. This is good achievement. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing, although in comparison with similar schools they were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were below average. Results at the end of Year 6 have improved and were above average in comparison with pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2

and in comparison with similar schools. Overall, girls have done better than boys but the school is closing the gap. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average in language and literacy and in mathematics. Currently in Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, showing the necessary concentration that the school gives to this work. In mathematics and information and communication technology standards are below average but are average overall in science. In religious education, history, music and physical education, standards are average but are below average in other subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic heritage achieve well as they make good gains in their command of language and attain similar standards as other pupils. Higher attaining boys and girls do equally well although they are not always sufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs also make good gains in relation to their targets.

Pupils' personal development is good. It is fostered well by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very good use is made of circle time. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes and there is very good racial harmony amongst pupils from a wide range of cultural heritage. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. Teaching is good overall, with examples of excellence. The provision is very good in the Foundation Stage. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. There is a good balance between experienced and newly qualified teachers. Pupils generally learn effectively and make good progress, although in Years 3 to 6 teaching strategies do not always make sufficient demands of the pupils. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs is good. The curriculum is well based on the National Curriculum and national guidance and effective planning is beginning to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Good improvements are taking place for science and information and communication technology. There is a good range of activities in the curriculum and very good use is made of the community to support learning. The accommodation and resources are good and are well used to support learning. Children and pupils are well supported on a personal level; they are well known and are appreciative of the support that they are given which raises their self-esteem and encourages them to achieve. The school recognises that it needs to make better use of assessment to inform pupils how well they are achieving and to help parents give even more support at home. Parents and the community make an effective contribution to the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision, which is well shared by staff and governors. She leads the school very well and is working most effectively with the staff to ensure that management structures are increasingly effective; this is beginning to raise standards. There is some very good practice amongst senior staff but staff with responsibility for subjects do not always manage effectively enough. Procedures for evaluating the school's work are good and this allows priorities to be established and acted upon well. Governors are very supportive, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and work hard to enhance the overall provision for the children and pupils by ensuring best value. They take their duties seriously but fail to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the provision of information and communication technology. Financial affairs and general school administration is very effective.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school which they feel is consistently improving. **Pupils are proud of their school**, which they feel is a happy place in which they are well supported and are making good progress.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To continue to raise standards overall through even greater emphasis on setting work that meets the differing needs of its pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the approaches to assessment, especially in science and foundation subjects, so that teachers' planning is better informed, target setting is extended and pupils are given further support in seeing how they can improve their work.
- To further develop the consistency in leadership roles in subject areas to increase the pace of improvement throughout the school and impact more widely upon assessment procedures and raising standards.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- for the teaching of information and communication technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children enter the school with standards that are well below average overall in the Foundation Stage. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language has risen since the last inspection from 36 per cent to 59 per cent and there is also a significant number of pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils' achievement is improving and standards in English and science are broadly average but below average in mathematics by Year 6. Across different year groups standards vary, reflecting the diversity of differing needs in the cohorts of pupils. Overall, achievement is sound and the improvement in standards has been recognised by a national School Achievement Award.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is improving and standards are rising.
- Special educational needs pupils make good progress in relation to their capability and sometimes achieve average standards.
- Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.

Commentary

1. When children start school in the Nursery, assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide-ranging but are below average overall and for a significant minority, well below average. They have particular difficulties in the area of communication, language and literacy, as a large percentage of these children do not speak English as their mother tongue and come from an extensive range of ethnic heritage. Additionally, a minority of children are identified as having special educational needs. In Years 1 to 6, the pupil profile is similar with a significant percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language and also pupils with special educational needs. There is also a small minority of pupils who are refugees. Overall, this diversity of learning issues places the school in challenging circumstances.
2. Overall results have risen in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests since the last inspection. However, there is some fluctuation between different cohorts of pupils, reflecting the mobility of the school population and the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs and who are at an early stage of learning English, factors which are not shown in these tables. In Year 6 the improvement has been in line with the national trend. The tables below refer to the 2002 tests because national comparative data is not yet available for 2003.
3. Results for Year 2 show better improvement than in Year 6. In Year 2, results were below average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were below average.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 15.3 (15.4) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 14.6 (13.9) | 14.4 (14.3) |
| mathematics | 15.9 (15.1) | 16.5 (16.2) |

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Results in Year 6 tests were average in English and in mathematics but well below average in science. The positive element comes in that English and mathematics show clear improvement over the last year although science does not. Again, very positive elements are the fact that in relation to pupils' **prior attainment** they achieved at well above average levels in English and in mathematics. Overall, results were above average for prior attainment and in relation to similar schools. The trend line for improvement mirrored that found nationally. Girls did slightly better than boys. Provisional results for 2003 are not as strong and reflect the lower prior attainment and diversity in the cohort of pupils.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 27.4 (26.4) | 27.0 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 26.9 (24.4) | 26.7 (26.6) |
| science | 26.9 (26.4) | 28.3 (28.3) |

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. From inspection evidence children in both the Nursery and Reception class make good progress and achieve well because of the high quality of provision and teaching. Children make good progress in their command of English because of the many good opportunities to acquire English within the very practical and visually accessible curriculum of the Nursery and Reception classes. By the time that they reach Year 1, standards are broadly average overall in the early learning goals in all areas of learning.
6. The improving standards when children leave Reception and enter Year 1 is beginning to impact on rising standards by the end of Year 2. However, this impact has yet to filter through and impact on standards by the end of Year 6, although the potential does exist for this to happen over time and if good practice is more widely shared by subject leaders. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve at a satisfactory level overall, with some pupils achieving very well. Overall, achievement is better for younger pupils because they are taught well more consistently. Standards are affected by the wide range of learning issues and, although pupils may achieve well they do not attain national average standards. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English and science but below average in mathematics. The improving levels in science reflect the concentration by the school to attend to this issue. Standards in information and communication technology are below average but rapidly rising as access to and use of resources improves. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to develop its application in other subjects. In religious education, standards are average with some good achievement. Achievement in other subjects is satisfactory overall but standards are broadly average. This reflects the fact that standards in language and literacy are very varied and although good progress is made in oral work pupils experience difficulties in the understanding and use of specialist vocabulary. Basic use of numeracy is underdeveloped and this does not support pupils' use of everyday mathematics.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, especially when they are supported by the skilled staff and the targets in their individual education plans are well met. Achievement for pupils who do not speak English as their mother tongue and come from a diverse range of ethnic heritage are broadly typical of the rest of the school and pupils make good progress by the time they are seven. This is because they benefit from the additional support of specialist teachers and classroom assistants. Bilingual and Afro-Caribbean pupils make good progress when supported by the specialist teams of teachers and classroom assistants provided by government grant. Good support is located in the lower school, but inspection evidence indicates that provision in classrooms without such support is sometimes less effective. Twenty five per cent of bilingual pupils are newcomers to English. In Years 3 to 6 the achievement of some pupils is below that expected for their age and this is because of their

inexperience in English and lack of specialist support. There is also evidence of a lack of awareness by some less experienced teachers of the needs of bilingual pupils in general classroom teaching. However, the pupils from minority ethnic homes attain as well as other pupils overall, with a significant minority attaining above average standards. This is a good reflection of the inclusive characteristic of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' **attitudes, values and personal development** are **good**. Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **good** overall. The school has concentrated successfully on creating a climate where the social and moral development of pupils is flourishing. **Attendance and punctuality** are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils feel secure and confident in school and form very good relationships with each other and the adults with whom they work.
- Behaviour in class and around school is good.
- Pupils participate well in all activities, both in lessons and in the good range of extra-curricular opportunities provided.
- Pupils from a wide range of cultures work and play harmoniously.

Commentary

8. Many children enter the Foundation Stage with below average levels in personal skills. Significant attention is paid to establishing routines so that children can understand what is expected behaviour in school. Children establish particularly good relationships with all the adults who work with them in this secure environment. They flourish socially, learning to take turns, listen to each other and concentrate on their activities. Overall, the children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery and Reception classes.
9. In Years 1 to 6, the school has concentrated effectively on developing a community in which pupils feel happy, secure and confident. Overall racial harmony is very good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong which is promoted from a very early age and pupils benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in school. The school is a very orderly community. The successful implementation of circle time and well-planned assemblies has ensured that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high priority. Assemblies take very good account of the diversity of religious cultures found in the school and meet statutory requirements. Pupils have had many opportunities to discuss issues of importance to them and to contribute to the establishment of a few simple school rules, which are followed closely. They appreciate the opportunities given in circle time to discuss whole school issues and to be involved in decision-making and development of their school. They are pleased that there is only one playground used now and that older pupils are kinder to younger ones. There are opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development, through taking responsibility, which they do willingly and show commitment and pride in these activities. Residential visits for older pupils in Year 6 provide a good opportunity for their social development. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted through religious education when pupils learn about the major world faiths but also in the festivals celebrated across the many faiths represented by the pupils attending the school. Overall, opportunities contribute well to the fact that pupils become more mature and responsible, a fact well supported by their parents' views.

10. Ethnic minority pupils take full part in the lessons observed and generally work very hard. They contribute well in group and paired tasks, particularly where there are visual prompts to make understanding easier. Occasionally in lessons the behaviour of older boys, from both indigenous white and also from minority ethnic heritage, is inappropriate and intrudes upon the general good order of the class, though this lack of commitment to the learning disappears when they are fully engaged in the task. Lack of comprehension is one of the factors of misbehaviour. Pupils talk with pride about the community languages they speak and are looking forward to extending their linguistic repertoire with modern European languages when they get to secondary school. One pupil explained how she speaks Shona because one of her parents is from Zimbabwe and another Tamil because of his Sri Lankan heritage. Some pupils attend supplementary schools, including at the mosque, where they are also learning to read the Holy Qu'ran in Arabic.
11. Very good relationships exist between pupils and this is reflected in the classroom with all adults involved in teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of good behaviour and pupils respond well to this. They are attentive and polite. Chances to gain house points, receive commendations or a mention in the Excellence Book or Board provide effective incentives for effort, good behaviour and quality work. Pupils with special educational needs behave well because most staff consistently have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Where a pupil occasionally displays inappropriate behaviour, teachers continue to insist on high standards of behaviour and remain very calm throughout their negotiations with pupils. This results in improved behaviour patterns. However, exclusion is rarely used and this is an improved pattern since the last inspection.

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 | 172 | 1 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 37 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 98 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 7 | 0 | 0 |

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

12. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They play well with their friends and willingly offer support to those who find playtimes difficult. Many pupils are happy to offer their friendship to lonely ones or support those with special needs. Pupils are eager to attend the good range of extra-curricular clubs and readily participate in educational excursions. They enjoy participating in sports and recall with pleasure when they worked with the community arts council. Pupils' respect each other's opinions well and listen and discuss issues sensitively. Good opportunities are provided in literacy, music, art, information and communication technology and history in which pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures is developed, although some opportunities are missed within the curriculum.
13. The rate of attendance is broadly in line with the most recently published national average and has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils like coming to school. Most pupils are keen to start work in the morning but some are regularly late. Most parents know they should notify the school when their child is absent and they do this conscientiously. Some absence is brought about through religious festivals.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.4 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.3 |
| 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

This school provides a sound quality of education for its pupils. Pupils generally achieve well because, with a wide range of learning issues, they are well supported in most classes. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is sound and is well enhanced by extra-curricular activities and good links with the community. Pupils are very well supported, although the procedures for assessment require attention to help pupils realise how they might improve their work further and to raise standards. Parents are very supportive of all that the school does for their children and willingly express their views about the improving provision.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall, with examples of excellence. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good and children progress and learn effectively. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning are good, but in Years 3 to 6 they are satisfactory overall, although for some classes the teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models for pupils. They generally have the skills and expertise needed to meet the pupils' diverse and often challenging learning needs. However, some staff are not very experienced and in a significant minority of lessons there is room for improvement in meeting the differing needs of the pupils. The teachers are still developing their knowledge of their pupils' capabilities and the levels of support for learning issues are less secure. The approaches to assessment are not sufficiently developed to support pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision in the Foundation Stage.
- SEN pupils' learning is well supported in lessons through effectively targeted support by skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language are very well supported by learning support teachers and assistants so that they achieve well.
- The differing capabilities and learning needs of the pupils are not always well met, especially in some classes in Years 3 to 6.

- The use of assessment is unsatisfactory although improving.

Commentary

14. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school across all age ranges. From inspection evidence a minority of teachers did not perform as well as their pupils' work indicated and some classes were not taught by their usual teachers because of illness. Both parents and pupils consider that they are well taught and that their teachers are very supportive. Pupils especially feel that their teachers help them to learn effectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| 3 (5.5 %) | 8 (15%) | 22 (41.5%) | 18 (34%) | 1 (2%) | 1 (2 %) | 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.

15. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. It has improved from satisfactory to very good since the last inspection. It is effective because there are very good opportunities for children to develop their confidence and competence across all of the areas of learning and to achieve consistently well. Staff work very effectively as a team and the children respond very well to the high expectations set. Planning and assessment are very good and used to plan appropriate activities for all children. Children with English as an additional language are making good progress because they are well supported by a bi-cultural classroom support assistant and individual education plans identify clearly support for the children with special educational needs. All the children enjoy coming to school and make good gains in their learning because the activities are challenging and enjoyable.
16. Overall, teachers in Years 1 to 6 have the relevant expertise and knowledge to meet the demands of the curriculum. They are very well supported by the skilful expertise and knowledge of the learning support teachers and support assistants. In the best lessons, teachers' effective planning ensured that the differing needs of the pupils were well met and support staff well integrated. Pupils made rapid progress because the work being undertaken was very well explained and often returned to so that it was reinforced. These lessons were conducted very briskly and teachers made good use of a wide range of learning resources and different activities. In these lessons, different groups were kept on task. Expectations for both work and behaviour were high and appropriate, enhancing pupils' achievement. The pupils enjoyed their work and were very willing to contribute to discussion and to complete their work. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils' progress in calculations was enhanced because they had to explain their strategy which supported the development of literacy as well as numeracy. In a Year 2 English lesson, the guided reading strategies were very well exploited and the teacher rehearsed words very well until pupils were working accurately. In both lessons, it was the skilful questioning of pupils that added to their knowledge, understanding and skills and supported their good achievement overall. The climate for learning is enhanced by very good display, which includes a good balance of pupils' work and commercially produced posters.
17. Teachers generally make good use of resources to extend pupils' interest in their work. Although the provision for ICT has only been recently developed pupils show their enthusiasm and work very hard to raise their standards. Insufficient use has been made of computers and staff have worked hard to both extend their skills and confidence, as well as mapping opportunities to use ICT to support learning. This is now being seen in the links between

mathematics, art, history and religious education as pupils work at different levels on religious artefacts and designs. Overall too few opportunities exist for developing independent learning techniques amongst older pupils. Equally, pupils' reading records are not always well used. Whilst there are good examples of homework being set and used to extend pupils' learning, the overall use of homework is only satisfactory.

18. A strength of the teaching is for the significant number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well integrated and supported by very able and skilled teaching assistants. This ensures that these pupils make the same rate of progress as their peers. When withdrawn for additional support they work hard at their tasks and are very well challenged through the high expectations of the learning support staff. However, occasionally teachers do not always make use of the targets in the pupils' individual education plans to plan effectively for them in lessons.
19. A similar strength is in the teaching and learning of the many ethnic minority pupils, where a very high proportion are at an early stage of learning English. They benefit from the very good support they receive from specialist teachers and classroom assistants. These members of staff work hard to help pupils achieve the learning objectives in line with the school's inclusion policy. They provide good opportunities for pupils to talk together and work in small groups. The staff explain tasks well and use the whiteboards to make expectations clearer. Support for pupils with English as a second language is good in the Foundation Stage. In the lower school, where this support is generally provided, pupils make good progress. In a Year 1 class a good range of activities ensured all capability levels were catered for. The teacher included pupils who had been working with their support teacher well in the final stages of the lesson. This is not always the case in Years 3 to 6, where there is less support generally and particularly in English lessons, where the linguistic demands of tasks are more difficult to access. While teachers acknowledge the needs of bilingual pupils in their planning, they are not always building in the additional support which is crucial for inexperienced English users. More support for meaning could be provided in English, for example, by the consistent provision of enlarged texts when drawing pupils' attention to particular linguistic features. Additional visual prompts, clear explanations and provision of key vocabulary would also make pupils understand lesson contents better. Where a minority of lessons were less effective, teachers talked for too long and the pupils lost interest, especially when they did not fully understand the language.
20. A key factor for development and to support the further raising of standards are the procedures for assessment. Procedures are generally effective for English and mathematics, identifying what pupils know and understand and do well, but also what they need to do to improve. The data is used to set pupils in attainment groups for teaching, set targets and identify additional support. However, systems of testing and record keeping are not in place in most other subjects although it is part of the next phase in school improvement. Information about individual pupils' achievement is neither complete nor sufficiently detailed to inform planning. Good records are kept by the ethnic minority achievement co-ordinator to help track pupils' English language acquisition level, using Hertfordshire's phase progression scales. This is an assessment system which is more sensitive to the small steps pupils take in the early stage of learning English. Her assessments are fed back into the whole-school record and used to identify specialist support in class. Analysis of the performance of bilingual pupils in English, mathematics and science in the national tests and non-statutory annual tests helps the specialist teacher plan appropriately. Similarly the records for pupils with special educational needs are well kept and inform planning. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity for booster classes, and pupils who are gifted and talented are being identified and given extension activities.
21. Because of the shortcomings, teachers do not always have a clear picture of all pupils' developing skills or, in some instances, work covered so far. This is an issue linked to the overall leadership and management role carried out by subject leaders. It results in work not matching pupils' capability or current performance. This results in work not matching pupils' capability or current performance level and leads to a minority of less effective lessons, occasionally making teaching and learning unsatisfactory. For example, in Year 6 pupils

worked on how words are broken into syllables. While this work was a support for lower achievers' spelling, it was not challenging enough for the rest of the class. In a science lesson on how plants take nourishment from the soil, pupils had done the task already and the work failed to pick up on their current understanding and push forward their thinking. In some subjects teachers do not have a clear picture of what pupils know in specific subjects. This reduces the security of the next stage of planning or what groups of pupils need to do to achieve the standards they are capable of in each subject. Some marking is very good but it does not always inform pupils well enough of what they need to do to improve. Year 6 readers, for example, knew their general level of attainment, but not what they needed to do to reach the higher levels.

The curriculum

Overall, **the curriculum is broad and is enriched by a good range of activities.** Planning for most subjects has improved since the last inspection but provision for ICT does not yet meet statutory requirements for pupils in Year 3-6. Staffing is well matched to the demands of the curriculum and there are sufficient teacher assistants to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and to support those pupils with English as an additional language very well. Accommodation and resources are very good for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum, accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage is very good.
- There is good enhancement of the curriculum.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Accommodation is spacious and well cared for and provides a good environment for teaching and learning.
- Provision for the continued improvement of pupils' skills in ICT, their use of numeracy in other subjects and their personal research skills remain in need of further attention.

Commentary

22. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very well structured to ensure good progress is made by the school's youngest pupils. The curriculum offers good opportunities for learning in all six areas of the national framework. Staffing is of high calibre, with very good support from teacher assistants to enhance the learning and achievements of all children. The resources and accommodation have improved markedly since the last inspection and they are used very well.
23. The curriculum in Years 1-6 provides an adequate framework for pupils' learning. It has appropriate breadth, although because of the concentration on literacy and numeracy, the balance is only satisfactory. The curriculum is generally well planned to focus on the learning objectives of the programmes of study in the National Curriculum and adopts the guidance offered by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, by the national guidelines for other subjects and by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Where curricular plans are well established pupils are making good progress and achieving well. This is particularly the case for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and has the potential to initiate improvements in pupils' attainments when the recently introduced curricular revisions become embedded over time. Statutory requirements for the teaching of ICT are not yet met in Years 3-6 and curricular provision for the teaching of science investigations remains insufficient. The co-ordination for music, art and design and technology and, as a consequence, the monitoring and improvement of provision, are under-developed. Particularly in these two subjects opportunities to draw from the cultures represented by the school population are underused as resources to enrich the learning of all pupils. The school recognises that the development of pupils' study skills, including their use of mathematics in other subjects, their use of library skills, and the use of ICT to support teaching and learning, all remain in need of systematic

planning to enhance independent and effective learning. Rightly, within the overall development plan for the school, these aspects are effectively planned.

24. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are very well supported by teacher assistants who, themselves, feel valued and well supported by the school. As a result of the skilled intervention of teacher assistants these pupils have equal access to the curriculum and make good progress. Those pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans to support their learning. These are reviewed regularly and these pupils achieve well.
25. The personal, social and health education programme is good. It is well linked into the circle time sessions as well as some elements, such as sex education and drug abuse, are covered separately for older pupils. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss issues which add to the development of their literacy skills as well as their overall development of values and beliefs. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. There is a good range of well-attended after-school clubs that promote pupils' interest and expertise in sports, ICT, drama and music. Competitive fixtures are played in a range of sports against other schools. Older pupils have the opportunity of outdoor pursuits. The opportunities for pupils to engage with the arts through after-school clubs or curricular enrichment events includes visiting theatre groups and musicians, which are used effectively to raise pupils' skills and understanding.
26. The school celebrates and examines a range of Christian and Muslim festivals as well as making an active contribution to local community and charity events to support the social, moral and spiritual development of pupils and now meets statutory requirements regarding the collective act of worship. Celebrating the diversity of its own community outside religious education lessons is satisfactory. An exception to this in the week of inspection was its sensitive response to pupils' fasting during Ramadan and preparation for Eid. The whole school understands the cultural and religious significance of this period and this is a very positive affirmation of Muslim experience. Many pupils have a rich language repertoire and broad cultural experience, which they are keen to talk about, including knowledge about life in different parts of the world and different climatic zones. For example one child pointed out where her extended family live in Botswana. Pupils attend the local mosques, gudwaras and temples and churches as part of their religious and cultural life. Such valuable experiences are not always effectively drawn upon to enrich every pupil's learning.
27. Accommodation is good and resources generally meet the demands of the curriculum. Computer resources have recently been improved in terms of a computer room and an increase in the number of computers. However there is an ongoing need to improve the curriculum and resources for music.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' **care, welfare and health and safety** are **good**. The school seeks to **involve pupils** in its work **well**. **Support, advice and guidance** for pupils are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong encouragement of good work and good behaviour.
- There is good access and support for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs.
- Induction arrangements in the Nursery are very good.
- Class teachers and teaching assistants have very good relationships with pupils.
- There are good systems for health and safety, child protection and pupils' welfare.
- The assessment system has good potential, although it is not yet used consistently enough to guide pupils' progress.

Commentary

28. The school has been successful in creating a community where all groups of pupils, from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, work harmoniously together. There are good policies and strategies for promoting inclusion and these are all working well. All major festivals are celebrated and all religions and cultures respected. Throughout the school pupils and adults form constructive relationships with others. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly through well-recognised channels. Good relationships are promoted through class activities, extra-curricular activities and circle time. Inclusion is identified clearly in all school policies and documentation. The school provides good personal support to pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. Pupils like the rewards they earn for good work and behaviour. Pupils win entries in the 'excellence book' or board and praise in assemblies. There are effective anti-bullying procedures. A pupil says *'We don't have any problems with bullying, but the teacher would deal with it if it happened'*. Another pupil says that what he likes about the school is that *'other people are nice to you'*. As a result of this support, the majority of the time pupils get along well at playtimes and lunchtimes and share the equipment available amicably.
29. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by teaching and qualified assistants, supported through national funding arrangements. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are well cared for throughout the school. Both groups of pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and are able to discuss any concerns they may have with teachers, support staff, or lunchtime supervisors. There is a very comprehensive policy, which has been the result of an effective working partnership between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the governor with responsibility for special educational needs. The procedures, practices and register of special educational needs are up to date and fulfil all legal requirements. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are well written with relevant and manageable targets and are reviewed regularly. There is currently no register for gifted and talented pupils although more capable pupils in a Year 5 mathematics lesson were given appropriate small group support and work closely matched to their needs.
30. Nursery and reception staff know their children very well. Their activities are monitored closely and every care is taken to ensure their safety. The induction of children to the Nursery is managed well. There is a range of meetings including home visits, which ensure that children are familiar with the nursery environment and the adults who will care for them. As a result children settle well and quickly into school. Parents are particularly satisfied with this procedure. Children transfer happily into the Reception class, which is next door because there are such close links with the Nursery unit. Those who go to school elsewhere have good contacts with their new teachers.
31. Whilst assessment procedures for all pupils are satisfactory in English and mathematics, in other subjects they are at an early stage of development. Pupils are aware of the targets they do have and they triumphantly mark them off when they achieve them. However, where targets not always specific enough to individual needs, pupils are not well enough supported to ensure that they know how to improve their work. Procedures for pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English are good. They are used effectively to identify the support they need when working in class lessons and when withdrawn to work in smaller groups.
32. The school seeks and acts on pupils' views. Pupils recently completed a questionnaire. In response to requests, there is now more play equipment. The school circle time enables pupils to express their wishes and canvass other ideas from classmates. The circle time recommended that only one playground should be used and this is making a good contribution to pupils' social awareness. Pupils extend their understanding of citizenship as they see how agreements enable them to improve life at school.
33. The staff and governors make sure that the buildings and grounds are kept well and that all health and safety requirements are met. The procedures are comprehensive and are followed

consistently by all members of staff. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities through a designated governor who has specific responsibility. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and requirements are fully met. She makes sure that staff are up to date with the code of practice through training. A good number of staff have first aid training which meets basic needs although there is a need for at least one to hold a current First Aid at Work qualification.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good links** with parents, the community and other schools. Parents support the school and have **satisfactory** involvement in their children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships with parents are good and the school provides good information so that they understand its vision.
- Parents are generally very supportive of school events and activities.
- There are inconsistent systems for home reading and homework.
- The Friends Association raises significant funds to support the work of the school.
- There are good links with the community and other schools.
- More consistent use is required of homework and reading records.

Commentary

34. The pre-inspection questionnaire showed positive responses to all 15 questions and although only a minority of parents attended the meeting, they also expressed very positive views, especially in relation to school improvement. Parental involvement in their children's learning is hampered by difficulties in the command of English in the community the school serves.
35. Parents are happy with the information they receive and overall communication is good through newsletters and reports, keeping parents well informed about the school and their children's progress. Parental involvement is encouraged; some parents help in the school and their ideas are valued. In activities seen during the inspection the help of the parents made a significant contribution to the achievement made by the pupils. For example, some parents support reading sessions in the main school and others help the reception children each week to use the library. Members of the community visit the school to explain their work and carry out related activities with the children and pupils. Parents with special talents and skills contribute greatly to the sports clubs. Additionally a significant minority of parents are employed in a range of support roles and they support links with other parents.
36. There are effective procedures for seeking and acting on parents' views and complaints are appropriately dealt with. There is very good liaison with parents and families when children start school and when they make the transition to the main school. Very effective links have been established with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The views of both parents and their children are actively sought through regular meetings with teachers and the SEN co-ordinator so that parents are kept fully informed about the progress their children are making. Because of the large number and diversity of ethnic minority families, standard letters are translated into community languages. Good use is made of the Hertfordshire interpreting and translating services when necessary, along with bilingual members of staff to help parents understand school procedures. Consideration is being given to tape recording school policies in a range of community languages for those parents whose command of written English or that of their own family language is limited. The specialist staff for African-Caribbean and bilingual pupils report on pupils' progress to parents as part of the assessment and record-keeping programme.

37. Parents enjoy attending special events such as assemblies or fund-raising activities organised by the Friend's Association, which children also attend. These activities such as discos and barbeques extend children's maturity and social awareness. Funds raised are used to benefit pupils' learning through the purchase of additional resources. The school holds informal meetings for the parents of the youngest children to help them understand how they could help their children at home. A small minority of parents are not effectively involved in supporting children's learning at school or home but the school is seeking to improve this by providing groups to help develop their skills, such as in literacy and ICT. Whilst parents generally support consultation meetings, sessions to explain the curriculum are less well supported.
38. There are good opportunities for parents to see teachers at the end of the school day. This is especially well used in the Nursery, Reception and the infant classes although parents of older pupils were also observed talking with teachers. Again, bilingual support staff play a crucial role in this work. Whilst annual reports give a sound picture of pupils' progress and how they might improve their standards, inspection evidence shows that homework and the reading records are used inconsistently. The minority of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting commented that they would like more consistent setting of homework and use of feedback through the homework planners, reading records and marking.
39. The headteacher and governors have established good links with the community. The school supports local charities, takes part in competitions and has regular visits to local places of worship. These activities help with pupils' awareness of the community and their personal development. Regular meetings are held with staff from other schools to discuss common issues. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of education with visits to secondary schools and good liaison arrangements in relation to standards and pastoral needs. The opportunities for booster classes are being effectively developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall governance, leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by the governors, the deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team. Since her appointment two years ago the headteacher has developed many aspects of the school's provision in relation to significant changes in the school population and staff and this has begun to raise standards. Good management procedures exist and the application of the principles of best value are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective leadership and management of the headteacher.
- A good focus on improving provision and raising standards.
- The effective leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, work for pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language.
- Improving strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- The significant contribution and support from governors.
- The good support from the administrative secretarial, finance and caretaking staff makes a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Commentary

40. The headteacher was appointed two years ago and has successfully brought about a range of improvements, which have included addressing some key issues from the last inspection. She has a very clear educational vision, which has focused on raising standards and ensuring the racial harmony of the school. Overall her strategy for change has been very appropriate and she is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, who has been in post for one year. In conjunction with the members of the senior management team there is a distinctive ethos

which is committed to the all round development of pupils. Evaluation techniques are very effective and inform the planning process very well.

41. Staff, including teachers and the significant number of learning support staff, are a united team who have a very good level of morale. They share the school's vision and work very hard to ensure that all the pupils from the very wide range of heritage found in the school are supported and thus ensuring that this is a very inclusive school and all pupils are valued. Staff with subject responsibilities are developing their roles. Overall their leadership and management are satisfactory; many co-ordinators are new to their roles. Developments in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular areas are recognised as the next stage of progression, and to increase the pace of improvement. Time is being given to staff to generate this role. However, a key factor is for subject leaders to improve their work in ensuring that pupil assessment is consistently developed. However, a key factor is for subject leaders to improve their work is ensuring that pupil assessment is consistently developed to further support the raising of standards. It is also linked to ensuring that co-ordinators have a clear vision and that this is implemented.
42. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and effectively ensure that all children make very good progress and achieve well from their low levels of attainment on entry. The coordinator has established an effective team of teaching and support staff. The co-ordinator for ethnic minority achievement provides strong leadership. She works closely with additional staff to review and evaluate targeted pupils' progress and to give advice and appropriate support. She recognises that there is a need to develop the teaching skills of non-specialist staff so that they work more effectively to support bilingual pupils who do not qualify against the Hertfordshire criteria for additional support. All staff need to develop the methodologies and strategies of the specialist as part of their teaching repertoire. This requires a whole-school focus and will inevitably support the school's drive to raise standards, particularly by the end of Year 6. The highly skilled and able special educational needs co-ordinator manages her team well and provides good leadership, support and guidance. She has been effective in her monitoring role and therefore has introduced successful strategies of early intervention to ensure that pupils are identified as soon as possible. Effective liaison with teachers ensures that pupils receive appropriate levels of support so that they make good progress in their learning. Changes have taken place in the method of deploying teaching assistants. They are now allocated to a class rather than to individual pupils, where their skills and expertise are used to have most impact. All teaching assistants attend regular training to improve their skills. The local education authority resource base for pupils with specific learning difficulties, which is closely linked with the local authority's educational psychology services, is based on the site. This unit is line managed by the headteacher but has its own manager who enjoys a close professional partnership with the school staff. Very good use is made of the unit's resources and expertise for training.
43. Overall the governance of the school is sound, with some very good features. Some governors have been appointed recently but overall there is a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors has a very good professional partnership with the headteacher and overall governors challenge the staff well, yet in a supportive manner. They effectively monitor the standards and quality of education. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, especially in respect of special educational needs and racial equality in light of the school population. The only issue is for the statutory requirements for information and communication technology, for which they have effective plans.
44. Good use is made of data analysis of national test results and governors are well aware of the differences in cohorts of pupils. Pupils' performance in the annual tests is analysed by the assessment co-ordinator and this helps the school evaluate its performance. The data is used to set targets in English, mathematics and science and to identify the need for additional support, but the school recognises that the procedures need to be rigorously extended to other subjects. Governors have been effectively involved in shaping the aims of the school, which are being increasingly well met, as apparent in aspects of school improvement. Issues from

the last inspection are now being rigorously attended to and because insufficient progress had been made school improvement is only satisfactory. Arrangements for staff development and performance management are good through the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning carried out by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and supported by the Local Education Authority. The headteacher is well aware of issues relating to teacher deployment and workloads. The good support from the administrative, secretarial, finance and caretaking staff makes a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, for example, in ensuring that the parents are well received and that the school environment is well maintained. Financial arrangements are very good and the administrator ensures that the governors are provided with appropriate information to budget for their decisions. The principles of best value are very well applied and as the table below shows, the contingency funds are appropriate. Overall, school development planning is strategic and has been well phased to address issues. Funds are being effectively used, as for example, for the recent purchase of new computers. The designated funding for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language, is most effectively spent and is supporting the raising of standards.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 1,263,776 |
| Total expenditure | 1,269,343 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,478 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 71,704 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 66,136 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school benefits from a purpose built Nursery and two Reception classes. There has been very good improvement in the quality of provision since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to very good in both the Nursery and Reception class. In the Nursery the outdoor area has been developed and now provides a very good learning environment, the provision for outdoor learning has improved in the Reception area and the school is in the process of developing this area further.

Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in Reception. The Nursery caters for 51 children who either attend the morning or afternoon session. The school has two intakes per year, in September and January, when children leave the Nursery and so that at the time of the inspection there was one class of 28 children, with 25 of them having English as an additional language and five have been identified with special educational needs. All these children are making good progress because they are well supported by a dual language support teacher and individual education plans identify clearly support for the children with special educational needs.

All children achieve consistently well in all areas of learning in both the Nursery and Reception class. Assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average and a significant minority of children have standards which are well below average in language and personal and social aspects. Children enter the Reception class below average in all areas of learning but they continue to make significant gains and most are on course to achieve the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year in all areas of learning. This positive start to school is achieved because the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and very experienced and knowledgeable about early years education. The co-ordinator is extremely well organised and leads her team well. Planning and assessment are very good and used to plan appropriate activities for all children. Induction to the school is very well considered and parents are well informed. The Foundation Stage is well staffed by three qualified teachers, a nursery nurse, two teaching assistants and two bi-cultural classroom support assistants plus additional support for children with special educational needs. All adults work very well as a team and are enthusiastic about their work. This all helps contribute to the positive learning environment; children enjoy coming to school and make good gains in their learning because the activities are fun, challenging and enjoyable to do.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for children to develop their independence.
- Children form very good relationships with adults.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Achievement is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children learn clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour.

Commentary

45. Children enter school with immature personal and social development. They make good progress and achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception because the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The majority show the potential to achieve the expected goals. Very good planning and organisation ensure children experience enjoyable activities that promote this area of learning. The school day contains an appropriate balance of teacher directed and

child initiated activities that contribute to children's growing confidence and independence. Children learn to play and work together and quickly learn to share and take turns. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, using the planning cards. Children in both the Nursery and Reception develop a positive attitude to school life and very good relationships with adults. All children in both the Nursery and Reception class make consistently good progress because adults work hard to ensure activities are enjoyable and challenging. This contributes to children's growing confidence and positive start to their school life. Children learn what behaviour is acceptable through systems like the traffic light activity, in which they take time out with the traffic light sand timer. In Reception rules are clearly visible and rigorously reinforced.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of role play is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Children achieve well and make good progress in their learning.

Commentary

46. The children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of the Reception Year the majority of children will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Very effective planning ensures communication and language skills are identified strongly. Children in Reception make good progress developing their speaking and listening skills; they explain how they made their Happy Eid cards. Teachers use open ended questions well, which helps children with English as an additional language and special educational needs explain how they created the word 'Floppy' with the fishing line game. Such children achieve well because the quality of adult support and sensitive use of intervention enables them to make good progress. In Reception more capable children write simple sentences such as 'I like eating apples'. They are encouraged to use descriptive words such as green and long. In the Nursery children make good progress using pencils and drawing shapes and lines; more capable children write their own name. Adults seize every opportunity to extend language. When the nursery children made fairy cakes they were encouraged to use words such as whisk, creaming, beating and mixing. The role-play areas are very well organised and contribute to children's developing capability to communicate effectively with others. In the Nursery four children communicated with each other as they organised who could sit in which position on the bus trip to the cinema to see The Three Bears film. They organise and negotiate who will be the ticket collector and the manager. More capable children suggest the bus goes to London or Milton Keynes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning are very good.
- Support for special needs children and children with English as an additional language is good.

Commentary

47. The children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year most children will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning are very good. Children develop a sense of number and shape because every opportunity is taken to develop learning in this aspect. Nursery children are guided to make hatbands and more capable children can arrange two different shapes in a repeating pattern. Every opportunity is taken to count and recognise numbers. During the morning drinks session children are challenged to count the milk cartons and say whether there will be enough for the group. Very good challenge encourages more capable children to deduce that if there are nine in the group they will have one carton too many from a basket of ten cartons. Singing rhymes such as 'One brown Teddy sitting on the wall' encourages children to identify language such as more and less. A child with special educational needs in Reception makes good progress beginning to recognise symmetrical shapes and patterns because he enjoys playing the 'four in a line' game with his teacher. Teachers match the task appropriately to the needs of the children and this is a strength. A pupil with English as an additional language is encouraged to hold the beanbag frog and this helps him understand the decreasing numbers of frogs jumping into the pond. He is not yet confident enough to sing all the words but clearly understands the mathematical concept. The teachers make the sessions fun and incite curiosity. When cutting out symmetrical shapes, the children shriek with excitement when a paper butterfly is unfolded.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities to learn about the wider world.
- There are good opportunities to use the computer.
- The support staff make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- Good planning ensures work is well matched to the needs of the children.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.

Commentary

48. Children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year most children will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Activities are very well planned and appropriate links made with other areas of learning. The nursery nurse helps children develop their growing awareness of how materials and substances change. Nursery children enjoy mixing ingredients and baking fairy cakes. The work is very well matched to the children's needs and older children are encouraged to read and follow the instructions on their own recipe card. They observe and learn how the flour, sugar and butter change when the runny eggs are added to the mixture and what happens to the mixture when it is baked in the hot oven because adults use questions effectively. Children develop their confidence and skill using the computer because they are guided carefully by adult helpers. Children in the Nursery and Reception class use the computer regularly and can explain in simple language what happens when the work is printed out. Children learn about religious festivals such as Divali, Eid and Christmas. They enjoy dressing up in Asian clothes to celebrate Eid.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities to develop a broad range of physical skills.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Children achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception class.

Commentary

49. Children make good progress and achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year the majority of children will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning is very good and there are very good opportunities for children to develop their confidence and competence in a wide range of physical activities. All children benefit from regular activity in the hall and they develop their capability to get changed for these sessions. Nursery children make very good progress developing a rhythmic response to music as they use silk scarves to circle, sway, jump and turn to the rhythm of the Bhangara music. By the time children reach Reception most children change independently for their sessions. They have very good opportunities to explore apparatus and the majority are jumping and landing safely. Children enjoy climbing, balancing and crawling under and over the apparatus. More capable children combine swinging and climbing skills as they explore the apparatus. Activities in the extensive outdoor area add to their development. Adults use language well to develop awareness of small, tall and wide shapes. Climbing skills are well developed in the Nursery as children climb the ladder in the house confidently to reach the loft. A child in the Nursery with English as an additional language develops confidence and competence rolling a ball down a drainpipe. There are very good opportunities to learn to grip pencils and paintbrushes and to use scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to develop their imagination through role-play are very good.
- Children achieve well and make good progress.
- Very good opportunities to experience mixing and applying paint.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- Good opportunities for children to learn a wide range of songs and rhymes.

Commentary

50. Children enter with creative skills below average. They make good progress and achieve well during the Nursery and Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year the majority of children will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. There are very good opportunities for children to develop their creative skills and experience a range of enjoyable activities. In both classes the role-play area is a strength and children are encouraged to use their imagination. Nursery children use the rich assortment of Asian clothes as they dress up for the Eid party. Teachers plan regular opportunities for children to mix and apply paint; consequently children know their colours well and confidently create lines, shapes and patterns on paper. Reception children know that if you add red and white paint you can make pink. Children in Reception develop their singing skills and knowledge of high and low sounds because the teacher has a very good voice and uses it to help children learn to distinguish different sounds. They develop confidence responding when

the teacher sings 'What is your name?' Children confidently sing their name adding the word lemonade. They develop confidence matching their sound to the teacher's very good voice and are beginning to recognise when the sound is high, low or in the middle. Throughout the Foundation Stage singing rhymes and songs are used frequently to help children's learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory** and has remained much the same since the last inspection. However, the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language has risen markedly, adversely affecting results in National Curriculum tests. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6, satisfactory, where the challenging level of literacy for the fairly inexperienced pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue slows overall progress.

The main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in 2002 National Curriculum tests were well above average in relation to similar schools and pupils' prior attainment.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 where teaching and learning are good.
- Well above average standards attained in writing by higher attaining pupils in Year 2.
- Good and often very good teaching by specialist staff enhances the progress for pupils with English as an additional language.
- Insufficient account is taken of the needs of bilingual pupils in lessons where there is no specialist support.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' progress.

Commentary

51. Currently, over a half of the pupils on roll are identified as having English as an additional language and a significant minority are identified with special educational needs. There have been some variations in National Curriculum test results year by year because of the make up of particular groups of pupils. The results in the 2002 tests taken at the end of Year 2 show that the percentage of pupils achieving expected standards in writing was average, but below average in reading. The percentage achieving at the higher level, however, was below average in reading and well above in writing. In comparison with similar schools, results were above average in both reading and writing. Results at the end of Year 6 were average at both the expected level and the higher levels. However, in comparison with their prior attainment at the age of seven and with similar schools, results were well above average. Pupils performed at similar levels as in mathematics but much better than in science. Girls performed better than boys. Pupils from ethnic minority families often attained as well as their peers although the results for those who were at an early stage of learning English adversely affected the overall data. Early indications for 2003 suggest that results have fallen amongst a weaker group of pupils.
52. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 but in Years 3 to 6 achievement is only satisfactory overall. It varies between different classes and reflects differences in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils in the current Year 6 are producing standards in line with those expected nationally and their achievement is improving. This is due to the very good teaching which is well supported through a team approach as appropriate. Those pupils who come from a diverse range of ethnic heritage generally achieve in line with other pupils across the year groups although there is some inconsistency in Years 3 to 6.
53. Standards in speaking and listening are average across Years 1 to 6 and pupils have good opportunity to talk together, for example, talking in pairs about the ideas presented before feeding back to the rest of the class. These talking partnerships allow the involvement of all

the pupils as the lesson unfolds. Teachers' skilful questions encourage pupils to explain their ideas and indicate how well they understand new ideas and concepts. Pupils listen well in lessons and raise questions when given the opportunity to do so.

54. Reading in Years 1 and 2 is generally average. In Year 2, for example, pupils use their good reading strategies to tackle unfamiliar words, occasionally drawing on their own experience to help them understand the detail of the story. They also check the overall structure of a sentence, re-reading when necessary to make sure that it makes sense. This reflects the good teaching of reading strategy and indicates that pupils are well launched into reading. In Year 6, pupils are beginning to explore a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction. Pupils are beginning to identify favourite authors and indicate preferences. They choose ambitious texts, for example "Harry Potter" and summarise its complexity well. Lower attaining pupils use punctuation well to bring expression and additional layers of meaning to their reading. They are beginning to recognise story types. For example, in "The Old Woman and the Vinegar Bottle", one pupil anticipated in true fairy story style that the old lady would waste her fairy wishes, landing back in the vinegar bottle at the end of the story.
55. In both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are developing satisfactory standards in writing by studying the way authors construct a text and use powerful vocabulary and a range of techniques to engage the reader. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils investigated the structure of a story about a cat who was adopted by his six neighbours, taking on six personalities to procure six dinners and six lots of attention from his adoptive owners. The pupils recognised the repeated sequence and the author's choice of language to suggest different personalities, different expectations and different rewards in each of the six households. They then used a very good shared reading experience to write their own version. In Year 6, standards are in line with expectation. Pupils explore different styles of writing and the distinctive conventional features they demonstrate. For example, they study the typical attributes of journalistic reporting. Pupils are beginning to understand that they can learn the characteristics of set pieces of writing and then adopt them in their own tasks, whether autobiographical, instructional, or report writing.
56. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 was generally good and sometimes very good, where teachers worked closely with specialist staff for English as an additional language to help every pupil achieve the learning objective. In Year 2 a very good collaboration between the class teacher and the specialist teacher produced an exceptional lesson where pupils achieved well beyond expected levels in exploring the detail of the class book they were reading. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is only satisfactory overall because teachers are less supported by specialist staff and do not always plan sufficiently for linguistic demands for bilingual pupils. For example in a Year 5 class pupils studied the story "Abomination" without sufficient support for the understanding of the complexity used or the culturally embedded meaning. In this story the mystery at its heart can only be understood by clear discussion about the family's attitude to illegitimacy. The literary style, describing the same events from the perspective of different characters also needed clear explanation, so that less experienced English users were aware that the same episodes were being described. Nevertheless, some very good teaching occurs in Year 6.
57. Planning draws on the National Literacy Strategy's teaching framework and ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered. Teachers indicate how they intend to support different learners in the class, though most pupils are expected to cover the same work. Higher attaining pupils do not get enough opportunity to work more independently as they are not consistently given opportunities to follow a lead or line of interest as a personal study either in English or across other areas of the curriculum. This situation does not allow them to achieve the higher standards of which some are capable. Assessments are made of pupils' developing literacy skills in extended pieces of writing, which are well marked and provide good feedback to pupils on their progress.

58. The current subject leader was absent during the inspection. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that leadership and management are satisfactory as he works closely with the assessment co-ordinator to address issues of pupils' performance and those raised by the local authority's attainment review. Analysis of performance in national tests and non-statutory end-of-year tests is used to identify individual and year group targets and to help teachers understand the achievement and learning needs of each class at the beginning of the academic year. Such data is also used to inform year group planning but there is inconsistency in the use of assessment to plan and provide feedback to pupils. There are good book resources for this subject, but staff are not exploiting technology to help pupils have full access to the meaning of unfamiliar tasks, through projecting a large section of the text of the book they are studying, for example, for closer inspection. Such approaches are important in most classes, but particularly where bilingual pupils' experience of a written language is limited in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Good use is made of discussion sessions to promote pupils' oral skills.
60. Insufficient opportunities are taken for pupils to use their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
61. Very good use is made of circle time sessions to develop pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills. The school intends to increase the opportunity for pupils to write more extensively to consolidate their writing skills outside English lessons. This is a good development and will provide a clearer picture of individual pupils' progress in writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory and improving, with some good quality teaching where teachers use the structure and content of the National Numeracy Strategy well. In these classes pupils' achievement is in line with their capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality teaching of seven year olds is increasing their achievement and standards.
- Effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy supports teaching and learning.
- The support provided by teaching assistants enables equality of access to the curriculum for those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Assessment data and marking are not well used to plan learning experiences that take the learning of different groups of pupils forward.
- The use of computers and calculators is underdeveloped.

Commentary

62. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, results for seven-year-old pupils were below average but were average when compared with those in similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was below national averages. Results for pupils at the age of 11 were in line with national expectations and in relation to their prior attainment were well above average showing very good progress. When compared with similar schools the results were above average though the proportion gaining the higher levels were below the national average. Since 1998 there has been a rising trend in standards. Results were similar to those in English but well above those in science. Both boys and girls performed similarly. Pupils from ethnic minority heritage achieve in line with other pupils.

63. Standards are average for pupils at the age of seven, showing an improvement from the 2002 results. However, they are below average for those aged 11, which is below previous results. The better standards of achievement of seven year olds arise because the quality of teaching and learning is higher in Year 2 classes. These teachers follow the content and structure advised by the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Lessons are well-paced, learning tasks are demanding, adopt a variety of methods and are well matched to the learning needs of different groups. As a result pupils are well motivated, concentrate hard, achieve well and make good progress during lessons. The pupils in Year 6 have lower prior attainment but the teaching is less well planned and the achievement of some pupils fails to match their capabilities.
64. By the age of seven pupils have developed positive attitudes towards the subject and are beginning to use mathematical vocabulary, symbols and diagrams to explain their work. Most can count, sequence, add and subtract numbers up to ten and show a willingness to tackle problems by translating sentences into mathematical operations. Pupils can describe some of the basic properties of two-dimensional shapes, but have limited experience of measuring and data handling. These achievements provide a sound basis for further progress. However, the achievement of older pupils is not always as good as it could be because their differing needs are not addressed sufficiently. At the age of 11 pupils are beginning to develop their own strategies for problem solving but they often need reminding about how to work in an organised manner. They can solve number problems using the four operations and can explain fractions but have limited opportunities to estimate and check the reasonableness of their results. Most pupils can describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes but show limited understanding of angles and have very little opportunity for work on data handling. Very limited use is made of computers and calculators.
65. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with examples of very good and excellent practice. It is slightly stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Where lessons have a clear focus on the teaching objectives of the programmes of study in the National Curriculum and follow the guidance on structure and content in the National Numeracy Strategy pupils achieve well. This happens in the Year 2, Year 3 and Year 5 classes where mathematics is taught in a lively and enthusiastic manner by skilful teachers who plan their lessons in response to regular assessments of pupils' work by designing interesting and challenging tasks that take their learning forward. Lower attainers, those with special educational needs and those from diverse ethnic origins are well supported by teacher assistants so these pupils make good progress in lessons. In lessons where teaching and learning are of high quality pupils capable of higher achievement are given tasks that challenge them to use their understanding and skills productively. As a result most pupils show a positive attitude to the subject, work hard during lessons and achieve well. Lessons that are less successful often fail to motivate and engage pupils because the teacher's planning lacks a clear focus, teaching skills lack variety and the tasks set for pupils do not match their learning needs. This reflects the fact that although the procedures for assessment are developing in line with the whole-school focus, they are not yet impacting sufficiently.
66. The subject is satisfactorily managed by two subject leaders who are good teachers and have a good understanding of mathematics. They share responsibility for the development of the subject and have worked hard to improve the planning and the quality of teaching across the school. They are well placed to continue to promote this improving trend. However, monitoring to advise on the ways in which assessments and marking can be used to set targets for pupils' learning and lead to more effective teaching across Years 1 to 6 as a whole is required.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Insufficient attention is given to the development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects.
68. Standards in mathematics across the curriculum are below average overall. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills to analyse and interpret data in other

subjects. Such opportunities do arise in science and in design and technology but do not form a part of a planned and systematic approach to increasing pupils' understanding and their use and application of mathematical skills in other areas.

SCIENCE

Provision is **satisfactory and improving**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving although still below average at the end of Year 2.
- Clear schemes of work are in place.
- Leadership and management are effectively improving the provision.
- Opportunities for pupils' independent enquiry skills are unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is not used well enough to guide planning or to show pupils how to improve.

Commentary

69. Results in the 2002 teacher assessments for pupils aged seven and in the tests for pupils aged 11 were well below average. For the older pupils, results were also below average for their prior attainment at the age of seven and in comparison with other schools. Results were well below those realised in English and mathematics. Boys performed better than girls although amongst pupils of different ethnic heritage results are hampered by their command of English.
70. Since the last inspection improvement has been limited because of a lack of action to address the key issues until the headteacher and co-ordinator were appointed two years ago. Their work has already begun to impact on improving standards and considering their low attainment on entry pupils now make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily overall by the end of Year 6. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6 and rising standards reflect the improving quality of teaching and learning. The potential now exists for further improvement.
71. Teaching is satisfactory overall. From the work seen for pupils up to Year 6 this has not always been the case and work standards have suffered from a previous lack of consistent teaching especially in the area of scientific enquiry. Teachers in parallel classes now plan similar work according to the new scheme of work. Although this is an improvement since the last inspection, teachers do not make good use of assessment to plan for the differing needs of their pupils. They use teaching assistants well to support those pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language but planning does not always include strategies to allow these pupils to gain greater understanding of lessons. Where this is done well, in Year 2 classes, teachers use props and repetitive language to help all pupils, but especially those pupils with English as an additional language, understand the scientific vocabulary they need to explain what happens when liquids freeze.
72. The opportunities given in lessons for investigations and experiments have improved since the last inspection but are still unsatisfactory, as more needs to be undertaken to redress the lack of teaching in this area in the past. Where teaching is good or better such as in an excellent Year 6 lesson, sound subject knowledge, effective planning, very good organisation and management ensured that all pupils were challenged and progressed well. The pupils showed their understanding of the basics of fair testing and were confident in using scientific vocabulary during their planning of their own experiments. Pupils' attitudes are very good, being eager and enthusiastic in all the lessons observed. They maintained their interest and their understanding was better where teachers demonstrated higher expectations and taught stimulating lessons.

73. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory with some good elements. The co-ordinator has put into place a comprehensive action plan based on raising standards of attainment. This includes a new scheme of work, better resources, training to improve teacher knowledge and understanding and monitoring of pupils' work. It has been very effective in ensuring that science is systemically taught and that all pupils carry out some scientific enquiries and investigations. It is also making a positive contribution to the use of data handling to support the use of mathematical skills. The overall use of assessment to inform planning and raise pupils' understanding of what they might need to do to improve their work is showing clear improvement, but is not yet used to maximise pupils' progress. There are still not enough opportunities for pupils, especially high attainers, to show more independence in developing their own lines of enquiry and investigation. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory although recent increases in computer resources have the potential to enable teachers to use the appropriate strategies as outlined in the scheme of work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory but improving**. Not all of the National Curriculum requirements are met and insufficient use is made of computers in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent developments in resources and staff expertise are good.
- Teaching and learning are improving and leading to pupils' good achievement in basic skills.
- Leadership and management are ensuring that the development plan is being well implemented.
- Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory although this is recognised.
- ICT is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

74. Following the last inspection, where improvements in ICT were a key issue, unsatisfactory progress was made. Although resources were improved inspection evidence shows that insufficient progress was made in improving the quality of teaching and learning, leading to all pupils making insufficient gains as they moved through Years 1 to 6. The recent development of a designated computer area has enabled the teaching of whole classes to improve markedly. However, this facility has significant shortcomings because the area is split into two sections even though the school has made best use of the accommodation. Action planning has led to the development of further resources as more computers are purchased but until the accommodation issues are addressed they prevent the maximum development of teaching and learning strategies. Teachers are now more confident and are making good use of the suite on a regular timetabled basis.
75. Standards are below average overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but rapidly improving. Pupils are learning to use ICT for word processing, graphics, the Internet and data handling as well as simple control, monitoring and modelling. Progress benefits from the introduction of whole class sessions. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers cope well with the split nature of the computer room and give clear objectives to their pupils. Good links were made with the work done in Year 4 to teach the basic skills through Color Magic software as pupils designed Islamic patterns. They gained an understanding of shape and symmetry from this work. The work set was well supported for pupils with English as an additional language by support staff. In Year 5, pupils made significant gains as they developed their expertise in the use of search engines to support history. Pupils in Year 6 displayed appropriate skills as they researched the LEA Intranet for information to support their work in art and history. This added to their basic skills for copying, pasting, changing styles and printing their work. The best lessons were well structured to meet the differing needs of language and capability. Support staff work in a very effective partnership with teachers and

know their pupils very well. This ensures that progress and achievement are maintained. As a result, in the direct teaching sessions seen, good teaching now enables pupils to make significant progress and achieve well. However, standards remain below average as pupils have not yet acquired the understanding as to how they can apply their basic skills to support their learning and there is insufficient coverage of modelling and sensing activities.

76. Leadership and management are satisfactory and some aspects of the work are good. The coordinator has only been in post for a short time but has recognised the relevant issues and plans effectively for discrete ICT teaching and learning. He has good subject expertise and is developing an effective scheme of work supported by national guidelines. However, it is essential that the quality of technician support is developed as the school adds to its computer resources so that the coordinator is not burdened and disrupted in his teaching. Not all of the National Curriculum requirements are fully met as the necessary software and hardware is not available for control technology and sensing for older pupils. This issue is about to be addressed. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as they do not give sufficient information as to the gains pupils are making. This is recognised and procedures are being developed and have the potential to further support planning and achievement. Monitoring of teaching and learning are sound and the school has a very clear view for the further development of resources to raise standards further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. The recent development of a dedicated computer area has initiated good developments. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they appreciate the recent developments which have given them an improved awareness about how they can use software programs in science, art, mathematics and design and technology. Word processing is used in English and history and there is evidence of data handling and graph work in mathematics. The use of the Internet and CD-ROMs is developing across several subjects, for research and pupils understand how to use e-mail. In their design work pupils have made good use of digital cameras. However, there is little evidence of ICT in work samples although some work is saved to disc. Opportunities for pupils to use computers for their own independent study are limited, although they are very enthusiastic to make use of computers outside of the school day. The recent purchase of additional computers will provide for access in classrooms, although many rooms have limited space for this provision.

HUMANITIES

Geography

78. Geography and history are taught alternately every half term and during the inspection history was the focus. Consequently there was not enough evidence to reach judgements on standards, or teaching and learning, in geography.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The scheme of work is now in place and the curriculum is now better balanced.
- Standards are still below national expectations.
- Co-ordination is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

79. Overall, standards are below the expected levels for pupils by the end of Year 2 and average in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6 but not enough evidence was seen to comment on achievement by the end of Year 2.
80. The recently introduced scheme of work ensures that teaching follows nationally agreed guidelines. Teaching is satisfactory by end of Year 6. Teachers are ensuring the subject is taught regularly but planning does not take into account the varying learning needs of their pupils. This is reflected in the overuse of the same worksheet for pupils of all capabilities. The use of historical enquiry is underdeveloped and there is unsatisfactory understanding of chronology as indicated by the lack of timelines in classrooms. Where teaching is good, this is reflected in good teacher knowledge and understanding of the subject as in the Year 4 teaching of mummification. There was effective planning and delivery of the lesson so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, fully understood the work, enabling them to achieve well and maintain high levels of enthusiasm and interest. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is due to poor teacher knowledge and understanding, especially in relation to the teaching of chronology. This was reflected in the limited use of timelines. In a display of photographs comparing old and modern Watford a timeline on the wall ended in 1964. This did not allow pupils to make sense of changes in Watford over time and in relation to events in their own lives. Pupil's attitudes and behaviour are good overall and especially in lessons where they were engaged and stimulated by the work. For example, in a Year 5 lesson undertaken in the ICT suite, pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding as they used the Internet to research for information.
81. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has resourced the subjects adequately but has no clear picture of standards. There are assessment procedures in place but these are not used well by all teachers. The improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory although this is recognised and history is a future focus in the overall school improvement development plan with the potential to remedy the shortcomings.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well planned.
- Pupils achieve well.
- There are good links with art and music.
- Links with ICT are not well developed.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

82. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils achieve well and across Years 1 to 6 standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and make the same progress as their peers. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Attractive and informative displays around the school celebrate work in all year groups and reinforce learning. Resources and artefacts are used well. The subject is well planned and includes good links with art, music and literacy, although links with ICT are insufficiently developed.
83. Pupils make steady progress across the year groups. Pupils in Year 1 are well challenged because teaching is good. They reflect on the implications of taking gifts and focus on the birth

of Jesus in Bethlehem. Teachers encourage pupils to apply knowledge well to modern day situations. Empathy is used well and pupils think carefully about the situation of wanting to take a gift when you have nothing to give. More capable pupils suggest giving non-material gifts such as helping with the washing up and tidying bedrooms.

84. There are good links with art and music. Year 6 pupils achieve well and make good progress understanding the significance of art for Christian and Islam believers. Average pupils in Year 6 explain that Islamic art uses repeating patterns, symbolic colours and writing about God. They are capable of talking about the different characteristic style of Christian art, which does not have any writing. They can explain the significance of the pattern on the prayer mats and more capable pupils know that there is always a mistake in the pattern to signify human imperfection. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the basic characteristics of the major religions. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the ends and beginnings of lessons are well used to recap on the main learning aspects of the lesson. Teachers identify pupils who have made better progress, the expected progress or insufficient progress but the assessment outcomes are not always used well to plan work closely matched to the needs of the pupils.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as has been improvement since the last inspection. There is a clear action plan for developing the subject and good progress has been made refining planning throughout the school. Visits to local places of worship, visits and visitors enhance the provision. However, assessment is not used sufficiently to support planning and pupils' targets.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

The provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on the progressive development of skills and imagination in Years 2 and 3, so pupils make good progress.
- There are limited opportunities for older pupils to develop artistic ideas and skills.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

86. The attainment of seven-year-old pupils is in line with national expectations and pupils achieve satisfactorily because the curriculum is well formed and the qualities of teaching and learning in lessons are good. Standards for these pupils have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils explore and share ideas, using a range of materials and processes to reflect their observations, thoughts, feelings and imagination, especially through the use of colour, pattern, form and space. They use a sketchbook effectively to investigate visual and tactile qualities and to record their developing ideas, but have too few opportunities to develop their work using ICT. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and prepare resources attractively at the start of each lesson. Teacher assistants and parents often help with practical activities and support pupils when talking about their ongoing work. There is equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. They show a very positive attitude to the subject, work hard in lessons and make good progress.
87. The judgements in relation to standards and achievement are based on work seen and discussions with teachers and pupils. Because of timetable arrangements only one lesson could be seen for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and thus no secure judgement can be made as to teaching and learning. By the age of 11 attainment is below average and the curriculum insufficiently robust and varied to sustain the continued development of pupils' artistic skills and experience. The pupils fail to achieve as well as they could because they have insufficient

opportunity to explore colour, texture, pattern and shape. Their work is restricted to sketching, using line and tone to record their observations and ideas. The use of ICT is improving as seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were investigating Islamic art. Good links were made to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as they explained their understanding of words such as patterns, tapestry, symmetry and tessellations. It also added to their multicultural awareness although opportunities to draw from the range of cultures represented in the school population are underused.

88. Improvement since the last inspection, when raising the attainment of 11 year old pupils was noted as a key issue, has been unsatisfactory. Rightly, the school has concentrated on other curriculum areas to raise basic standards. It recognises the need to deploy a member of staff as subject leader to improve the monitoring and development of provision and to raise older pupils' achievement.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**. Although there was no opportunity during the inspection to see this subject being taught, it was apparent from pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers and from the various displays of products and designs that the provision has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently introduced scheme of work helps pupils develop their use of the design process and ensures they engage with an appropriate range of tools, materials and techniques to develop their practical and recording skills in a coherent and systematic way.
- The achievement of seven-year-old pupils aligns with their capabilities but 11 year olds underachieve in this subject.

Commentary

89. The attainment of seven-year-old pupils is in line with national expectations. The scheme of work is well used by teachers to develop pupils' skills in designing and making a range of interesting products. Pupils in Year 2 have gained experience making moving pictures, preparing food and building homes. They can design and make puppets, vehicles and wind-up toys. They select appropriate techniques and materials, use a range of joining and fixing procedures and, with the help of writing frames, are able to explain their choices, why they are proud of their work and can note the improvements they could make to their models. All pupils use sketchbooks to record their ideas effectively and, on occasions, pupils use digital cameras to illustrate their work in progress. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, make good progress and achieve well.
90. The progress of younger pupils is not matched by the achievement of pupils at the age of 11. Currently their work shows they have less confidence than younger pupils when preparing and annotating preparatory drawings and design diagrams. Their achievement does not align with their capabilities. This is because the recent curricular revisions have not yet resulted in improved skills when older pupils are designing, making and evaluating products. However, 11-year-old pupils have a keen interest in the subject and they are willing to learn.
91. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is an effective teacher who has the skills and strategies needed to monitor the quality of teaching and to monitor the ways in which marking, assessments and record-keeping are used. Good progress is being made in advising colleagues about further curricular improvements to support further improvements in attainment by pupils in Year 6. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is developing from a low base and the potential now exists for the attainments of pupils to continue rising.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory overall**. Evidence indicates that all aspects of the curriculum are taught to pupils throughout the school and teachers make music an enjoyable experience. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of singing in Years 1 and 2.
- Good teaching.
- Unsatisfactory assessment.

Commentary

92. In the limited range of lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. Teachers had planned effectively and used the resources very well. This approach supported pupils' achievement very well and led to standards which are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
93. Standards in singing in Years 1 and 2 are good. Pupils sing a good range of songs. They are able to sing in unison in a four-part arrangement, for example "Frere Jacques". In Year 2 pupils explore long and short sounds instrumentally. As preparation for this work they were given the opportunity to listen to a range of musical instruments and to identify those playing long and short sounds, using appropriate language, for example "bowing" when talking about the cello and "opening and closing valves" when talking about brass instruments like the trumpet. Pupils worked enthusiastically when given the opportunity to improvise with a range of instruments, for example beater, chime-bars and wood blocks. They worked collaboratively, composing a repeating sequence of long and short sounds, using simple notation to record their efforts. They were then able to use this notation to play back the tune to the rest of the class.
94. In Year 6 pupils confidently explored the rhythm and intonation of street criers as part of their work on Victorian life. They clapped out a rhythm with good judgement and went on to reproduce it using chime-bars and the five notes of the pentatonic scale. The teacher then asked them to notate their composition, recording it on a blank stave. Pupils' musical experience was very varied and class planning allowed them to work at an appropriate level, the most musically gifted pupils going well beyond the lesson plan to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
95. Pupils' attitude to music is very positive. They work well in groups and appraise each other's work with sensitivity and good judgement. They rehearse and practise their composition before playing back to the rest of the class. Behaviour is very good, even when pupils are very excited.
96. The teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In the very good singing assembly, each member of staff was very involved with groups, ensuring that the standard achieved in the four-part harmony was well above the typical standards for their age. Currently, the pupils are preparing for Christmas by rehearsing a range of carols. Links to the Christian faith were not adequately made, and pupils understanding would have been increased through the use of visual prompts to gain a greater understanding, for example, of the nativity. In Years 3 to 6, evidence in books shows that work planned covers areas in the scheme of work, though the depth of coverage varies. There is often over-use of worksheets and cut-and-paste activities, rather than evidence of pupils reflecting on and recording a range of musical experiences.
97. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The school does not have a specialist music teacher. Planning uses a nationally approved scheme. Good use is made of a range of music from different cultures within the scheme of work. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is carried out in the context of the approaches at a whole school level. The procedures for

assessment do not ensure that staff have a secure awareness of pupils' progress. However, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory as the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen from below average to average.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

- Main strengths and weaknesses.
- Standards are in line with expectation and achievement of all pupils is satisfactory.
- Extra-curricular clubs are well attended.
- The use of assessment to inform planning is not well developed.

Commentary

98. Since the last inspection standards and the quality of teaching and learning have been maintained. Standards are in line with expectation and achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. All pupils including those identified with special educational needs and pupils who have English as their second language make the same progress as their peers. The school now follows national guidelines and consequently there is a clearer progression in learning. No lessons were observed in games or swimming although the school reports that pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 6.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with instances of good teaching. When teaching is good vocabulary is used well to extend the quality and range of movement experiences. In less effective lessons activity time is curtailed because pupils spend too long observing the work of others and not enough time refining and developing the quality of their own work. Most pupils in Year 2 can move in a variety of shapes and understand curled, stretched, wide, narrow, small and large shapes. More capable pupils can create a short partner sequence with contrasting shapes. Average pupils produce a sequence matching their partner's shape.
100. Progress is steady as pupils move through the school. In Year 3 pupils are able to combine two different balances on large and small body parts. Teachers do not always give clear guidelines to help pupils improve the quality of their work. In Year 6 pupils make satisfactory progress creating a dance motif to communicate Aztec life and good links are made in relation to history. Pupils create a short dance phrase with a partner and individually. They can explain clearly how the dance communicates the characteristics of the Aztec people. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the use of assessment to inform planning is not well developed.
101. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear development plan and progress has been made establishing extra-curricular clubs and establishing links with outside sporting bodies such as the local hockey club. Fixtures take place with other schools and these activities are well supported and provision for sporting activities is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of circle time.
- There is good coverage of relevant topics.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

102. A range of circle time lessons were observed in which pupils, in mixed age classes, discussed what they do well and why. This approach proves to be very beneficial as it raises pupils' awareness of their personal and learning skills and raises their self-esteem. The lessons also enhance standards of literacy as pupils are called upon to explain their views and teachers work well with them to ensure that they structure their answers well. Activities and discussions also enable older pupils to understand how their behaviour and values can impact on younger children. It raises their awareness of their responsibility and role as good citizens. There is a good programme of activities including work on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. Teachers plan effectively and as they know their pupils well, they often frame the questions most appropriately and sensitively. This helps the pupils to feel secure and thus they willingly contribute their ideas and views. Overall, these lessons make a good contribution to the racial harmony and good order of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

| | |
|--|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |

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

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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