

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS ARNOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dagenham

LEA area: Barking and Dagenham

Unique reference number: 101220

Headteacher: Hilary Ritchie

Lead inspector: Michael Tumelty

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th November 2003

Inspection number: 258180

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 392

School address: Rowdowns Road
Dagenham
Essex

Postcode: RM9 6NH

Telephone number: (020) 8270 4588

Fax number: (020) 8270 4580

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Brian Speak

Date of previous inspection: 1st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Thomas Arnold is a large Community Primary School catering for 392 boys and girls between the ages of three and 11.
- The school attained the Investor in People award in 2002.
- The school undertakes a Family Learning Programme in conjunction with a local further education college to support parents' learning in English and mathematics.
- The school is working in collaboration with the Community Music Service and Dagenham Priory Arts College to support the school's arts and music development.
- Attainment on entry to the school is well below that which would be expected nationally.
- The school is situated in an area of significant socio-economic deprivation with an above average number of pupils (32 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A larger than average number of pupils in almost all year groups enter or leave the school other than at the usual time of doing so. For example, almost half of the Year 6 cohort joined the school since Year 1.
- The number of minority ethnic pupils has increased since the last inspection. A high number of pupils (22 per cent) are from other than White British backgrounds and 6 pupils are refugees and asylum seekers. Nine different ethnic groups other than White British children are represented in the school and a higher than average number (ten per cent) of pupils have a language other than English as their first language.
- An average number of pupils (23 per cent) are identified as having special educational needs with a higher than average percentage (2.1 per cent) having statements. The range of needs of those pupils on School Action Plus span moderate learning difficulties, autism, Down's Syndrome and emotional and behavioural difficulties, and there is one pupil with a significant medical condition.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16960	Michael Tumelty	Lead inspector	Art, music
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
29979	Sheila Rowan	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, design and technology, physical education
18466	Kevin Hodge	Team inspector	Mathematics, special educational needs, information and communication technology, religious education
2756	Michael Barron	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, science, geography, history

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school providing good value for money. The good leadership of the headteacher, good management and good teaching ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils are keen to come to school. The school provides a safe and welcoming environment in which pupils learn well. Pupils receive a high level of care and support. The school experiences a higher than average number of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than the normal times of doing so. Not all parents are supportive of their children's learning and regular attendance.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching, assessment and the quality of education provided by the school are good.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average at age 11 compared to similar schools.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is strong and supports achievement well.
- The school is well placed to improve the curriculum and its leadership beyond core subjects.
- Leadership and management are effective but less so in the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of information sent to parents and the school's links with parents need improvement.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been improved and assessment is well developed. Together, these have led to consistent achievement and standards rising faster than the national trend. Pupils' attendance has improved even though it is still below average. Provision for religious education, music and ICT has improved. The strength in art has been maintained. Both pupils' spiritual and multi-cultural learning are still underdeveloped, as is the outdoor environment in the Foundation Stage. These remain as key issues.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	D	B
mathematics	D	D	C	A
science	C	B	D	B

*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 enter the nursery with very low attainment. **For all pupils, achievement is very good in the nursery and good in other years, although inconsistent in the Reception classes.** Pupils enter Year 1 having attained the early learning goals, with the exception of those relating to language and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Year 2, attainment in writing is at the national average with reading well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics and science are now in line with the national average. By the end of Year 6, inspection evidence indicates standards in English, mathematics and science have improved beyond the test results mentioned above and are at the national average. In relation to similar schools nationally, attainment is broadly average in Year 2. It is in the top 20 per cent of schools by Year 6 in relation to the new national value-added measures. Standards in ICT are in line with expectations and art is above average.

Pupils' personal development is **good**. Their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory** and their social and moral development is **good**. Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and multicultural learning are often missed because they are not systematically planned for in lessons. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning and to each other are all **very good**. Attendance is still **unsatisfactory** although the school's procedures are rigorous.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good. Teaching is now consistent and is ensuring that pupils generally achieve well. Expectations of what pupils will learn are high and this, together with good assessment and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, has led to improved standards in core subjects. The curriculum is strongest in the core subjects but is at least satisfactory elsewhere. There is scope to further develop the curriculum. More planned opportunities are needed for pupils to use their improved literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects. Pupils need to be more consistently involved in research and investigation activities. There are good community links which enhance some aspects of learning. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall although there are improvements needed. The school provides a very caring and welcoming environment in which all pupils thrive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The good leadership of the headteacher has had a successful impact on raised standards and consistent teaching across the school. She is ably supported by her senior team. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is less strong although satisfactory. The Nursery and the Reception classes do not act as a single team but as separate units and this limits pupils' achievement. Subject leadership is good in core subjects but inconsistent elsewhere. The governing body is very supportive of the school and ensures that the school meets those statutory responsibilities which impact on pupils' achievement, their learning and the teaching they receive, and on their safety and welfare. The governor's annual report to parents is unsatisfactory as some of the information governors are legally obliged to include is missing. Governors are making prompt and effective efforts to remedy these omissions.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the teaching their children receive and the progress they make. Many parents support their children's learning at home and attend school to support events in which their children are taking part. The inspection team is pleased to support these positive views but considers that parents could be given better information about what their children will be learning and how they can help. The quality of information in pupils' reports is inconsistent and could be improved. Some parents are concerned that there are no regular surveys of parents' views and the school is not perceived as taking parents' views into account. A number of parents do not support their children's learning or regular attendance and punctuality effectively and this makes the school's work more difficult. By contrast, the pupils are overwhelmingly happy with their school and there are good procedures, including the school council, to gather pupils' views and act upon them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage team.
- Construct and implement a strategy for the further development of the curriculum by:
 - Developing the role of subject leader beyond core subjects.
 - Increasing the opportunities for pupils systematically to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.
 - Increasing the opportunities for pupils to investigate, experiment and research for themselves and apply their learning to real life.
 - Improving opportunities for pupils' spiritual and multicultural learning.
- Construct and implement a strategy for improving the school's links with parents.
- Improve pupils' attendance rates.
- Improve provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure all statutory requirements are met in relation to the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils enter the school with attainment well below what would be expected nationally. Good achievement across the school ensures that, by the age of 11, pupils are attaining at the national average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement has been above the national trend at both age 7 and age 11.
- Pupils enter the school in the Nursery with standards well below what would be expected nationally but achieve well.
- Achievement is uneven through the Foundation Stage.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and test results at age 11 show that standards of attainment have improved to being broadly in line with the national average in all core subjects.
- Writing results at age 7 are above the average for similar schools nationally.
- By age 11, pupils' attainment is above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics when compared nationally with other pupils with similar prior attainment at age 7.
- Pupils, including those with special needs, achieve consistently well from Years 1-6.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.9 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (14.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (25.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.0 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Pupils enter the school with a limited range of early learning experiences and attainment that is well below what would be expected nationally. Pupils achieve very well in the Nursery particularly in the development of social and language skills, as a result of effective teaching. This rate of achievement is not sufficiently maintained during the rest of the Foundation Stage, due to ineffective liaison between those classes and the Nursery. Most pupils enter Year 1 having attained the early learning goals with the exception of those relating to personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy.

2. At both age seven and age eleven, the school has improved pupils' attainments at a rate faster than the national trend. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Results of the most recent national tests at the end of Year 2 show significant improvement upon those of the previous year. Writing attainment is at the national average with strong attainment at the highest level. Reading standards are well below the national average, and mathematics and science attainment are below average. However, when compared to schools in similar circumstances across the country, the comparative picture is stronger, with average attainment in mathematics, above average attainment in writing but just below average attainment in reading. There is comparatively strong attainment by the more able pupils at Level 3 in writing, mathematics and science. Observation of the current Year 2 in class and examination of their work indicates that this picture of improvement is strengthening and that standards of attainment in mathematics and science are now in line with the national average.
3. The profile of strongly improved attainment continues in classes for older pupils due to improved and more consistent teaching and effective assessment. Although, in the most recent tests at age 11, pupils attained the national average only in mathematics, the strength of the improvements made is seen when pupils' current attainment is compared with those schools across the country where pupils had similar prior attainment at age seven. Attainment in English and science is comparatively above average, with mathematics well above average. The recently-introduced national value-added measures show that the pupils in last year's Year 6 made progress in line with the top 20 per cent of schools in the country since taking the Year 2 tests in 1999. Classroom observation and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are now in line with the national average in English and science. The school uses targets well and has recently raised its target for English to the current national average of 75 per cent reaching Level 4 and above. Inspection findings would indicate that the school can be confident that this will be attained.
4. Consistent teaching and rigorous assessment ensure that pupils, including the small number of minority ethnic pupils who are at the early stages of language development, achieve well across the school. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their own targets and also achieve well. They receive good support from teaching assistants and their work is planned effectively. The school has good systems for tracking their progress. The pupils make good progress in their grasp of the basic skills, but their withdrawal for small group language teaching means they sometimes miss key parts of lessons in a variety of other subjects.
5. Standards of attainment in religious education are now in line with the locally-agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in art and design remain above the national expectation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Attendance at the school has improved but is still unsatisfactory. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning.
- Good co-operation between pupils helps them to learn.
- Pupils show a good level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and understand the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is limited.
- Pupils' attendance is well monitored and is given a high priority in the school.
- There is a relatively high level of unauthorised absence

Commentary

6. The pupils' attitudes to work are very good. They are motivated and eager to tackle the activities presented to them. They settle quickly to their work, listen well, and work willingly. Their behaviour throughout the school is very good. At lunchtimes in the dining hall, the pupils line up and wait their turn and they behave well with a minimum of supervision. In the playground, they co-operate well and make full use of the interesting features there. In lessons, the teachers generally manage behaviour well which ensures that there is minimum time wasted before starting lessons. This was particularly true for the oldest pupils who work well and settle quickly to their work. The pupils who work outside of the classroom behave well, listen attentively and enjoy their activities. In contrast, some pupils in Year 3 became restless with their computer work in one lesson when the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory.
7. The pupils have a good knowledge of both school and classroom rules. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, often pointing out to visitors what they can and cannot do. Their moral development is good. There are many good opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibility, and they respond well to these. For example, monitors help with giving out registers in the morning and helping with activities and equipment in the playground. The school councillors are proud of their role and appreciate that their views are taken into account.
8. The pupils have an appropriate level of respect for the beliefs and values of others when they are given the opportunity. Although this represents some improvement since the last inspection, where the pupils' spiritual development was poor, this aspect is still underdeveloped. Some helpful contributions and links with religious education are made to promote their understanding. For example, an assembly on Remembrance Day and some follow-up lessons in RE provided some opportunities for reflection. However, the pupils are not sufficiently challenged to respond more deeply. Pupils' social development is good. The relationships throughout the school are very good, and all pupils and staff get on very well together. They care well for each other. The pupils work very well together in lessons, both in pairs and in groups. Many of them have a basic understanding of their own culture but there are few opportunities for them to reflect on the culture of others. Different faiths are studied in RE lessons and the pupils know some of the key elements of different faiths, but these are generally superficial. Few pupils could recall going on any visits to different places of worship, for example, which restricts the pupils' understanding of life within a multicultural society.
9. Attendance has steadily improved since the last inspection, due to a consistent focus on individual and class attendance by the school and the access and attendance officer. Outside each classroom is a chart celebrating those with 100 per cent attendance and a weekly class award is presented. The school is rigorous in its definition of unauthorised absence, hence the higher than average figure as there is no automatic approval of, for example, holidays in termtime. The great majority of parents ensure their children attend school regularly although there is an increasing number who are taking their children out of school for family holidays. A very small number of pupils are consistently late for school but there is a good system in place to ensure that they are questioned about the reason for their lateness and to ensure they apologise to their class teacher. Teachers mark registers correctly.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	1.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

10. The number of exclusions is very small and declining. In the last year only one pupil - a White British boy - was excluded for 3 fixed period exclusions before transferring to a special school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by senior staff and this has impacted strongly on the quality of the school's provision for learning day to day. Good management has successfully ensured that teaching is now much more consistent and is ensuring that pupils generally achieve well across the school. Standards in core subjects have risen as a result. The curriculum is strongest in the core subjects but is at least satisfactory elsewhere. There is scope to further develop the curriculum by providing more systematically-planned opportunities for pupils to use their improved literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects and for pupils to be more consistently involved in practical research and investigation activities. There are good community links which enhance some aspects of learning. The ethos of the school is very good. The school provides a very caring and welcoming environment in which all pupils thrive.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expectations of what pupils will learn are high although on occasions the most able could be challenged more.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and know the next steps in their pupils' learning.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of other pupils who need more focused support is good, enabling their achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed very well and they can work well independently and collaboratively.
- Relationships are very good and pupils receive very good support and encouragement from adults.
- Teachers use a good range of teaching methods to secure pupils' interest in activities.
- Opportunities to use pupils' very good attitudes to learning in their own investigation and research are limited.
- Homework is used effectively to support learning.
- Assessment, target setting, marking and feedback to pupils about their learning are good.

Commentary

11. Teachers work well in year-group teams to plan their work, share expertise and ideas. Teachers are committed to improving the quality of their teaching and the learning opportunities provided for pupils. They have responded positively to the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their work by the headteacher and other senior staff. This has ensured that teaching throughout the school has become much more consistent than at the time of the last inspection, although it is particularly strong in the Nursery and in the classes for the oldest pupils. Within each year group, there are significant strengths. The sharing and adoption of this good practice is supporting further improvements in teaching throughout the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 64 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (12%)	33 (52%)	21 (33%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

12. In response to the school's intentions to raise standards, teachers have generally high expectations of what all pupils will achieve. In English and mathematics, pupils are challenged to use what they already know to improve, and activities are generally well matched to pupils' abilities. In the vast majority of lessons, this strategy is effective and pupils' learning is good. In many lessons, there is good support for the least able and extension activities planned for more able pupils and fast workers. However, in some lessons in science, the planned activities do not sufficiently challenge some of the most able pupils and opportunities for extending learning further are missed. Teachers have good subject knowledge overall, know the steps that pupils need to take in their learning and plan lessons that have clear learning objectives which are well understood by pupils. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and a good range of resources to maintain pupils' interest and involvement. They explain activities well, give good demonstrations and show pupils how to think through problems. Teachers' use of questioning is particularly effective in many lessons where teachers encourage pupils to articulate their thinking and remedy misconceptions. In the two lessons judged unsatisfactory, achievement was prevented because the books used in one English lesson were not effectively matched to pupils' abilities and an ICT lesson was ineffectively planned so pupils learned little. Homework is well used to extend classroom learning and to develop pupils' independent learning. It is effectively marked and used well when pupils return with it to class with completed assignments.

13. Teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs are good. Teachers include pupils who have special educational needs into all activities and make sure that they are involved in questions and discussions. The teaching of literacy skills in workshop groups for those pupils who need more focused support is of good quality and supports learning and achievement well. Support assistants provide good help in small withdrawal groups and within some lessons.

14. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and they have worked very hard to ensure that pupils are increasingly self-disciplined and their attitudes to work are very positive. This supports learning significantly. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are very good and lessons are productive because adults encourage and support pupils effectively to give of their best. Pupils are confident both with the teachers, and with other pupils when sharing their own ideas. Pupils work well in classes on their own, in pairs and small groups and are willing to think through problems and give of their best. Yet the opportunities for them to use these well-developed skills to work together to plan their own work, to investigate, experiment and research for themselves are insufficient, particularly in science but also in wider areas of the curriculum. There is effective practice in this area within the school, particularly in Year 3 science teaching, that needs to be extended further.

15. The quality of the school's assessment and target-setting is good at all levels and has had a significant impact on learning and achievement. Teachers generally take care to ensure that pupils know and understand the learning intentions of lessons. Many teachers take considerable care to monitor pupils' responses in class and then, if necessary, modify the teaching input to ensure effective learning. A number of teachers, in art lessons for example, use items of pupils' work from the previous year as exemplars to encourage appropriate achievement. At the end of lessons, many teachers involve pupils in summarising the learning that has taken place. The verbal feedback teachers give to pupils about their learning and achievement during lessons in many subjects is impressive as is much of the written marking.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers' marking of books is very focused on the learning intentions of the piece of work and there are effective suggestions and targets for improvement set. Procedures for more formal assessment and tracking of individual pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science are also good, completed accurately and used well across the school to identify whole-school issues for improvement and set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Assessment in ICT and religious education is satisfactory. Very challenging whole-school targets are set and pupils' progress is monitored regularly to identify levels of progress made and action that needs to be taken.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides adequately for all pupils and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities provided. The resources of the school are satisfactory and the accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision is made for pupils in the Nursery.
- The curriculum provision in core subjects is effective and has led to a rise in standards.
- An effective start has been made to the development of the arts curriculum.
- The systematic planned use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Opportunities for pupils to investigate, experiment and relate their learning to real life situations are limited.
- The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The withdrawal of some pupils for extra help means they miss key parts of lessons.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The outside play area for the Foundation Stage pupils is unsuitable.

Commentary

16. The quality of the curriculum provided has improved since the last inspection. There are now schemes of work in all subjects, including religious education (RE) and music, and there is now a more even coverage of subjects across the school. The curriculum meets all the statutory requirements.
17. The school has an appropriately-planned curriculum in core subjects. In English, mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education, for example, the school follows the schemes developed by the local education authority (LEA). This approach is largely successful in that the pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has risen strongly over time. The school has, this year, prioritised further development of music and the arts in general. Productive links have been established with a local arts college and the Community Music Service. These are having a significant impact on the curriculum in these areas. The curriculum in art is enabling good teaching and high standards of work to be produced. The music curriculum is improving strongly and, with the very active support of the music service, two complete year groups are learning a wide variety of instruments, and teachers' professional development in music, and consequently the quality of provision for the subject, are being enhanced.
18. The curriculum generally caters for the needs of different groups of pupils. The curriculum in English and mathematics provides an appropriate level of challenge for more able pupils. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good and is successful in raising the pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy. This is supplemented effectively with other activities involving improving their personal, social, and health education. The support staff show initiative and work sensitively with individual pupils and their individual work is well planned across the week. This includes individual, small-group, and class-based help. On

occasions, the pupils who are withdrawn for specific teaching in literacy or numeracy do so at key moments in the class lesson. Over time, this is reducing their opportunities for learning and achievement in the wider curriculum.

19. There is scope for the further development of the curriculum. The school has worked successfully to improve pupils' skills and standards of numeracy, literacy and information technology. However, although a satisfactory start has been made, there are still too few planned opportunities systematically to integrate these skills within other subjects across the curriculum to further enhance learning. Likewise, the school has improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school to very high levels. Yet the opportunities for them to work together to plan their own work, to investigate, experiment, research for themselves or apply their learning to real-life situations are too limited both in mathematics and science as well as in wider areas of the curriculum.
20. There is a wide range of after-school clubs including football, choir, hockey, and drama. Many pupils take part and enjoy their activities. Links are developed with the wider community and support the curriculum appropriately. The school choir for example has worked with a local secondary school to produce an audio CD of their singing. Other enriching activities also take place, such as school plays, and artwork with the local arts college. Visitors, such as the African drum group, form an important part of school life, but visits away from the school are comparatively limited.
21. The school has a good range of expertise within its teaching staff, which is enriched by having some very able overseas-trained staff. The staff regularly attend training, which has recently included mathematics courses attended in teachers' own time. The numbers of support staff mean that not all classes receive additional support, but the pupils with special educational needs are ably supported. All areas of the curriculum have at least adequate resources. In art, the resources are good. The school benefits from spacious internal accommodation, with two halls, library, and additional spaces for teaching groups. The playground has recently been improved and supports pupils' play well. The lack of a dedicated play area for the Foundation Stage pupils, noted in the last inspection, continues to restrict the physical development and activities that can take place.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall, with the care of pupils being very good. All staff know the pupils well and good relationships have been established which support the pupils in their learning in school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support is provided by the school welfare assistant.
- Pupils with special needs are very well supported by caring adults.
- The induction arrangements for children as they move from Nursery to Reception are good.
- The school provides a very safe environment for the pupils.
- The School Council provides the pupils with a way of giving their views and helping to improve their school.

Commentary

22. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils are very good. The medical welfare assistant knows all the pupils well and is experienced and trained to provide first aid. Very good records are kept of any accidents or illnesses. The school has procedures in place to support any individual medical needs and the school nurse visits to carry out medicals. Altogether, six other members of staff have first aid training. Very extensive records are kept of accidents, which are rare. The school has a good health and safety policy and all

- the necessary checks are carried out regularly. The school is very secure and care is taken to check all visitors entering the site.
23. The headteacher has received training in child protection procedures and has trained the support staff in school procedures. The child protection policy is not dated and no review date was noted.
 24. The educational and personal support for pupils is good. Teachers track every child's educational progress very carefully on a day-to-day basis and formal reports are written once a year. However, these reports do not provide much detail about the personal and social developments of the pupils, although over 97 per cent of parents believe the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. The quality of individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with special educational needs is good. IEP targets are well thought out and are reviewed regularly. They include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are well met, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.
 25. There are good practices for getting to know children before they start school and the nursery provides a happy and secure environment. When pupils move onto one of the four local secondary schools, an appropriate programme of induction visits is organised.
 26. The School Council meets each half-term and pupils from years 3 to 6 meet to discuss how they would like to improve their school. Recently, the focus has been upon providing facilities for outside play, particularly at lunchtime. The School Council members enjoy their role and wear their badges with pride. They are pleased with their improvements as now pupils are able to play with construction toys, read books and use equipment at lunchtime outside. Each class displays its school rules and these are known by all the pupils.
 27. Pupils have personal learning targets which are noted in the front of exercise books and often displayed in the classrooms. Reminders are given to pupils to act upon their targets during lessons and this is a good procedure.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are satisfactory links with parents and with other schools. The links with the community are good and enhance some aspects of pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are happy with the education provided for their children.
- There are strong productive links with one local secondary school.
- The Friends' Association raises funds for the benefit of pupils.
- Parents do not always feel their views are sought.
- Some of the information to parents is unsatisfactory.
- Links with parents are not as strong as at the time of the last inspection.

Commentary

28. Parents' views, as expressed through the questionnaire, are positive in relation to the school's teaching and the progress that pupils make and inspectors would agree with this opinion. However, some parents have expressed concern that their views are not always taken into account, in particular in relation to school uniform. There is some evidence to support this as there are no regular surveys of parents' views although occasionally specific issues such as homework are highlighted. It is, however, several years since parents were last asked their opinion on whether or not a uniform would be desirable.

29. Many parents do support their children at home by listening to them read, for example, but there are few parents now who regularly volunteer to help in school, apart from with the youngest children. A small number of parents do not support the school in relation to ensuring that their children attend regularly and punctually. Parents are very supportive of any event involving their children and during the inspection, a large number of parents attended class assemblies. A good percentage also attend termly consultation evenings with their child's class teacher. However, only very small numbers attend other school meetings such as the Governors' Annual General Meeting. The parents of the pupils with special education needs are invited to attend the regular reviews of their child's progress, but a significant minority do not attend, despite the school's best efforts to encourage them.
30. A small number of parents run the Friends of Thomas Arnold Association and organise regular popular discos for pupils. Support by a wider number of parents for other fundraising events such as quiz nights is inconsistent.
31. The information that the school provides for parents is satisfactory but with some weaknesses. Monthly school newsletters are produced, giving notice of significant dates and relevant information. However, parents no longer receive regular curriculum information telling them what their child will be learning or guiding them as to how they can help. In addition, the annual written report has only very brief comments on subjects other than core subjects and the quality of information about pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is inconsistent. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are both unsatisfactory. Some of the information that the school is legally required to give is missing and neither document is particularly attractive or "user-friendly".
32. Community links include visits to the local library and leisure facilities such as for sailing, and visits from, for example, the fire brigade, the road safety officer and the vicar. Local football and cricket clubs have also enhanced pupils' enjoyment of sport and the school has had some help in developing their grounds from a local horticultural organisation. Use is made of the school by a community forum that holds its meetings there and the local councillor uses the school for his surgeries.
33. For several years, the school has offered a family literacy and reading enhancement project in conjunction with a local college. Although these courses have had some impact on the confidence of parents who have attended, in some cases enabling them to be employed by the school, recent interest from parents has waned.
34. The systems for pupils to transfer to the next stage of their education are satisfactory overall although the school does have good links with one of the main receiving secondary schools. This school has become actively involved in music and dance activities such as organising a choir, providing training for staff and running a dance programme for the youngest children in the school. This has had a positive impact for the pupils involved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Governance is satisfactory. Core subject leaders and other key staff exercise generally good leadership and management. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are less strong, although still satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership has impacted on raised standards of pupils' attainment and ensured improved consistent teaching across the school.
- Leadership and management of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 co-ordinators are effective in ensuring policies and practice are consistent.
- The Foundation Stage staff do not act as a single team.

- The leadership and management of English, mathematics and science are having a strong impact on pupils' achievement.
- The leadership of other subjects is inconsistent.
- Governors are very supportive.

Commentary

35. The headteacher gives the school positive direction based on a clear mission statement and school aims related to developing effective learning and talent and a sense of social responsibility. She has been very focused on ensuring pupils achieve well and standards of behaviour improve and in this she has been very successful. Her insistence on appointing staff of good quality and building a purposeful team has been central to this improvement. Despite not being able to appoint a deputy headteacher, she has built a strong senior team whose talents complement her own. The assistant headteacher, who leads Years 1 and 2 as well as the school's provision for special educational needs, and the co-ordinator for Key Stage 2 who leads Year 3 - 6 are effective leaders and good role models for other staff. The leadership of the Foundation Stage, including the Nursery and the Reception classes, is not as effective. As a result, Foundation Stage staff do not act as a single team but as separate units within each year group which limits the achievement pupils make.
36. The school has made the improvements to pupils' attainment and standards of behaviour by thorough strategic planning and ensuring that individuals and teams within the school fully understand their role in improvement. Paradoxically, what is written in the school development plan does not fully reflect the thoroughness of the actual practice. For example, while the plan does contain targets related to the school's budget and spans a three-year period, success criteria do not refer sufficiently to the impact of tasks undertaken and evaluation arrangements are unclear.
37. The school is managed well by the headteacher and her senior staff. Staffing is stable and year group teams work well together. Newly-qualified teachers are well supported and the school works well with initial teacher training provision at University of Greenwich. The school monitors and evaluates provision carefully and takes appropriate action. The monitoring of teaching quality is undertaken effectively. Performance data is particularly well analysed and involves the headteacher and senior staff as well as class teachers. For example, the headteacher has to hand profiles for each year group with an individual file on each pupil, showing an overview of core subject progress. This attention to pupils' achievement is carried into staff performance management which involves the headteacher, with all senior staff effectively managing the performance of their teams and teachers having pupil progress targets. Staff development practices follow on effectively from performance management and opportunities offered are well linked to the school's priorities. Some staff have undertaken courses in their own time to improve practice. Besides courses, good use is made of teachers observing colleagues and demonstration teachers from other schools.
38. The leadership and management exercised by English, mathematics and science leaders are of good quality and individual leaders have made a strong contribution to the improvement of the school. Core subject leaders analyse data, are well focused on evaluating standards of pupils' work and support improvements in teaching. The coordinator for special educational needs carries out his responsibilities effectively and efficiently. He tracks pupils' progress carefully, and maintains careful records of all dealings with agencies outside the school. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. The leadership of other areas of the curriculum is much more inconsistent. It is satisfactory overall but there is an absence of leadership in design and technology and a number of subject leaders who are relatively new to their post. Most have an awareness of what they need to do and have sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the role effectively. As the school develops the whole curriculum further, there will be a need to improve the management structures to enable subject leaders to monitor practice and support colleagues and their pupils' learning more effectively.

39. The governing body is very supportive of the school and ensures that the school meets those statutory responsibilities which impact on pupils' achievement, their learning and the teaching they receive, and on their safety and welfare. The governors' annual report to parents is unsatisfactory as some of the information governors are legally obliged to include is missing. Governors are making prompt and effective efforts to remedy these omissions. There is a strong corporate will to support the school in further improvement and governing body meetings are well attended. The governing body as a whole knows the main strengths and weaknesses of the school, although the level of experience of individual governors varies considerably. However, the long-serving core governors are appropriately influential and visit the school regularly outside of governors' meetings. Some governors, for example, helps with the catering for the after-school booster classes for Year 6 pupils. Governors have full access to all local authority inspectorial reports which are also regularly summarised for governors in the headteacher's report to the governing body. Governors value the work of teachers and other staff and are aware of the improvements that have been made to the school's provision to support pupils' learning. For example, governors debate the outcomes of national assessments and other progress data and regularly start meetings with a curriculum input from one of the school's subject leaders or a local authority representative. The school is well supported by governors in the improvement of attendance as all parental requests for authorised absence for termtime holidays are granted or refused by the governing body.
40. The funds available to the school are used appropriately to achieve the school's priorities and have been used well to support the raised attainment and improved achievement of pupils. Funding to support pupils with special educational needs is used well and closely monitored. The governing body monitors spending effectively and the office staff work very well in financial and day-to-day administration. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily overall. Procedures to consult pupils are well developed through the school council but consultation with parents has not been effective enough.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,085,408
Total expenditure	1,087,041
Expenditure per pupil	2,938

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,801
Balance carried forward to the next	39,273

41. The school gives good value for money. The good leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff and the good quality of teaching and learning have been very effective in raising standards and ensuring pupils achieve well. The very good ethos for learning and the pupils' good response to this, demonstrated by their very positive attitudes and high standards of behaviour, also contribute strongly to achievement throughout the school. The low level of pupils' skills on entry to the school, especially those affecting language and personal and social skills, make learning and achievement more difficult. The high number of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than the normal time of doing so makes the school's job of ensuring effective learning and achievement difficult. Not all parents support their children's learning or regular attendance and punctuality effectively.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and is similar to that reported by the last inspection. Children enter the school with a limited range of early learning experiences and are prepared satisfactorily for transfer to Year 1 even though overall attainment on entry to the Nursery year is now well below average and has declined since the previous inspection. Even so, children attain average standards at the end of the reception year in all aspects of learning, with the exception of language development and social development. This represents good overall achievement.

Most children enter the Foundation Stage of education with well below average social and language skill development. Effective curricular planning in both the Nursery class and the Reception year provides children with varied and interesting experiences which promote good learning and help them to achieve well. However, the quality of teaching varies between classes with better, more effective teaching in the Nursery class. Nearly all children in this age group achieve very well, especially in developing social and language skills. Unfortunately, liaison between both Reception classes and the Nursery class is presently limited. As a result, Foundation Stage staff do not act as a single team but as separate units within each year group. This affects children's progress, especially in further developing language and social skills. For example, in one Reception class, pupils had less developed social skills than were observed in the Nursery class.

The school has developed efficient systems to quickly identify children who may have special educational needs, especially in developing language and communication skills. Adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. The ratio of adults to children is good and this helps to ensure that the needs of all are met. Whilst indoor accommodation is exceptionally spacious, outside facilities have not been improved since the previous inspection and are still unsatisfactory for the development of play and learning. The Nursery outdoor area is small and cramped and Reception year children only have access to a grass-covered area, which is bumpy and unsuitable, especially when it is wet. Resources for outdoor activities are also unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and the quality of care provided by staff is good; however, a majority will not reach the expected goal by the end of the Reception year.
- Supportive relationships in the Nursery class enable children to feel confident and happy and make very good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is very good in the Nursery class.

Commentary

42. The personal, social and emotional development of the current intake is well below that expected for children of Nursery age. Very good teaching in the Nursery class, however, enables children to achieve very well and learn very effectively and results in the accelerated development of personal and social skills. As a result, children transfer to the Reception year smoothly and settle in to their new classes well. However, further progress in this area of learning during the Reception year is limited and varies between the two Reception classes. As a result it is unlikely that a majority of children will achieve the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development before the end of the Reception year and this will affect their transition into Year 1.

43. Children in the Nursery class are friendly and many work well at tasks such as painting and using construction kits without interfering with others. Adults work well to build up confidence and self-esteem and most children take notice of the high standards that the adults expect. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably but many still find difficulty in doing this or being quiet when others answer questions. During storytime, many children listen well because of the interesting way adults read stories, but some children show little respect for both adults and other children. They are very egotistical and find it difficult to understand that they are not the only ones in the class!
44. Reception children are beginning to show sensitivity to the needs of others and are able to share things but in one class it was evident that several children found difficulty in not shouting out and had limited self-control. Many found it difficult to follow instructions and two boys were deliberately destructive during an observed lesson. In both Reception classes, many children are reticent to join in conversations and some have only developed tenuous relationships with adults and other children. The gains in learning already evident in the Nursery class are not continued in the Reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons promote the development of language and literacy, especially speaking and listening.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but most children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goal by the end of the Reception year.
- Attitudes to learning are good because of structured teaching in a majority of classes and as a result, achievement is good.

Commentary

45. Many children enter the school's Nursery year with seriously underdeveloped speaking and listening skills and their overall attainment in communication, language and literacy is well below average. Teaching is good overall and Nursery and Reception teachers focus on developing language skills as a priority, with sessions often being structured in order to concentrate on promoting the further development of communication skills, especially speaking and listening. As a result, children achieve well in nearly all classes. Even so, attainment is limited. Adults talk to children frequently and give them regular opportunities to talk to others in order to develop their confidence in this area of learning. However, some pupils possess a very limited vocabulary and rarely enter into discussions. It is unlikely that most children will meet expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.
46. Adults use simple language to communicate when talking with children in the Nursery class. Many children have little confidence when using speech to communicate and some use only gestures, facial expressions or single words. The few more able children can use simple sentences well and one girl was quite fluent in her use of language. When asked to get a book for another child, she said '*Let me find it*' quite confidently! Most children are able to listen attentively when a story is read to them. For example, when an adult read the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', many children were listening intently as she made the story come alive by reading with expression and feeling.
47. Children enjoy being read to but are less willing to enter into conversations, even in the Reception class, because of limited language development. During a lesson on sounding the letter 'h', many Reception children remained silent even when they were spoken to directly by their teacher and some even found eye contact difficult! Several could only communicate through the use of single words or, more often, simple phrases. However, many children enjoyed listening to a story and nearly all joined in singing to the words of the 'h' song.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and ensures that most children achieve well.
- A wide range of activities ensures children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of shape, number and pattern.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good and most teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. As a result, there is every indication that children will attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. This represents good achievement overall throughout the Foundation Stage and very good achievement in the Nursery class.
49. In lessons in the Nursery class, children were able to distinguish different shapes such as circles and triangles and could count up to five. Many showed an interest in counting plastic animals and several were proud that they could count out loud up to five even though they did not fully recognise the written numbers. In one very effectively taught session, activities were very well matched to children's needs. They enjoyed their work and made very good progress in developing ways of counting as a result.
50. Children counted down from five when singing a song about vanishing ducklings in one Reception class. During one well-planned activity, where teaching was good, the teacher and her effective teaching assistant worked well together to encourage children to develop confidence when using numbers. Nearly all children could count up to six on their fingers. One little girl counted quickly to seven and nearly all could recognise up to nine different objects and understood the concept of 'more' or 'less' and could distinguish patterns in numbers during well-focused appropriate practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned in lessons to promote many aspects of learning in this area.
- Children have good opportunities to use computers.
- Children have few opportunities to visit places of interest outside the school environment.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are good and most children achieve well in this area although they are given very limited opportunities to extend their knowledge of their local environment through off-site visits. Many pupils display a curiosity about the world around them and work well when given a range of interesting activities designed to stimulate their curiosity and enhance their understanding. This was evident in the Nursery class when children watched a student teacher working potting compost. They pretended to plant seeds and increased their understanding of 'wet' and 'dry' by watering the earth. Good teaching during this activity was characterised by the way in which the student questioned children well about soil in order to increase their

understanding of how potting compost changed when wet. It was a really messy activity, which they got a lot out of, and one which they really enjoyed!

52. In both Reception classes, children had access to computers and most could use a keyboard and a mouse when using programs such as 'Colour Magic' to draw or erase alphabet letters. Children used construction apparatus to make and play with interesting shapes and models and used their imaginations well when working with sand. Groups of children sorted objects and toys but found difficulty explaining what they were doing. In one lesson, children displayed adeptness at cutting, gluing and sticking small pieces of card onto paper.
53. There is every indication that most pupils will attain the early learning goals in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the Reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

54. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning as no indoor or outdoor physical education sessions were observed during the inspection. Teachers make the best use of the unsatisfactory outdoor accommodation even though both Foundation Stage outdoor learning areas are unsuitable and outdoor resources are also unsatisfactory.
55. However, there is an emphasis on building up aspects of physical development within other areas of the Foundation curriculum. Children engage well in activities requiring hand/eye co-ordination in both Nursery and Reception classes and develop their manipulative skills well by handling computer mice, scissors and brushes as well as small construction equipment with increasing dexterity. Many children use a fine grip when holding tools, for example, glue sticks and pencils. Standards were as expected for this age group in the limited number of observed activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and is very good in the Nursery class.
- The standard of singing in the Nursery class is good.
- Children use their imagination well when engaging in creative activities and role-play.
- Teaching assistants provide good support and this aids the development of children's learning.

Commentary

56. Children are enthusiastic and achieve well in this area of learning because of the interesting and stimulating range of activities they are provided with in nearly all Foundation Stage classes. Nursery children use colours imaginatively when painting and drawing and many are able to distinguish different colours, such as red, orange and yellow, quite well. Teaching in the Nursery class is very good and stimulating and the atmosphere is vibrant as children explore using different materials and colours and spontaneously sing '*If you're happy and you know it...*' when engaged in exciting activities.
57. This good start is built on well in at least one Reception class as imaginatively structured activities, together with good support from an effective teaching assistant, enable children to further develop creatively. For example, during one lesson, a group of children worked together in their 'café' imaginatively to order and make food. They knew 'tomato', 'sandwiches' and 'cheese' and cooperated happily in their play roles. The teacher and teaching assistant took every opportunity to extend pupils' language through play and children sustained their learning

and persevered at their work. In both Reception classes, there were early indications that the majority of children were on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English have improved since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- There is strong focus placed upon developing pupils' reading and writing skills.
- The marking of pupils' work is effective in informing them of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has time to monitor and evaluate work in classrooms.
- The library is an asset to the school but additional fiction books for older children would improve the provision.

Commentary

58. Standards in English have risen considerably because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. When making comparisons with national data for 2003 tests, pupils aged seven were well below the national average in reading but broadly in line in writing. At age 11, standards in English were still below the national average. However, when compared to similar schools, based on prior attainment at age 7, then pupils' attainment is above average. This represents good progress from entry when many children's communication, language and literacy skills were well below what would normally be expected. Standards are continuing to rise. Classroom observations and scrutiny of the current Year 6 pupils' work show that standards are now inline with the national average. The school uses targets very effectively and has confidently raised the English target for Level 4 attainment in 2004 to 75 per cent, the current national average.
59. The inspection found that pupils with special educational needs and the three pupils at the early stages of English acquisition with English as an additional language, achieved well throughout the school. The good support for those pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress and enjoy their learning. In a workshop lesson for lower-attaining pupils, the Year 3 pupils rehearsed their sentences with a partner to help them form their ideas before writing. All teachers plan their work carefully and every effort is made to raise the pupils' standards by good support and encouragement.
60. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 1 and 2 and improving in Years 3 to 6. Staff work hard to encourage pupils to extend their vocabulary by:
 - repeating sentences for pupils to copy orally;
 - encouraging pupils to speak to a partner to share ideas;
 - explaining the meaning of any unfamiliar word; and
 - providing opportunities for pupils to speak together in different voices to sound like a character in the book.
61. Pupils enjoy reading and make good progress. By Year 2, some are fluent readers who use expression and are keen to answer the teachers' questions. However, other pupils are still hesitant readers who need adult support with unfamiliar words. By Year 6, the majority of

pupils read with expression and accuracy and can infer the meaning from the text. One Year 6 class enjoyed reading text about World War 2 and found out about homes in this period as part of their learning in history. Many opportunities during English lessons are provided for group, paired and individual reading and this has contributed to the improvement in reading standards in the school. A large and comfortable library provides mainly non-fiction books and books for younger pupils. All classes visit the library each week and pupils borrow books, and visits to the local library have also been organised.

62. In writing, standards have also improved and are broadly in line with the national average attainment at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress because of good teaching. The Year 6 pupils can draft their writing and use their own targets to improve their work. Younger pupils can write in sentences and many write at length using joined handwriting and accurate spelling. Year 4 pupils were able to select the main parts of the Little Red Riding Hood story and also identify adjectives and nouns from the text. The school is clear about the need to continue to improve children's writing opportunities across all subjects.
63. In the lessons seen, teaching was good overall, ranging from some lessons which were very good to one which was unsatisfactory. The features of the very good lessons included:
 - improved lesson planning;
 - high expectations of what the pupils could achieve; and
 - very good modelling by the teacher of the quality of writing.
64. Pupils work hard in their English lessons and concentrate well. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils did not make progress as they were unable to read the guided reading books which were not well matched to their abilities.
65. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very knowledgeable about how to further improve standards in English. He has regular time to monitor the subject, to support teachers and to observe lessons. The good assessment systems in place contribute to the raised standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. The development of language and literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory overall and these are best developed in the classes for older pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils achieved well in history, reading and writing about how people lived during the Second World War. Despite this, there is considerable scope for greater and more systematic linkage between the development of speaking and listening and reading and writing skills in English lessons and their use to deepen learning across the whole curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

The overall quality of provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results in national tests, particularly for the oldest pupils, have improved.
- Pupils have a good grasp of number work throughout the school.
- Assessment and analysis of pupils' progress are good.
- The scheme of work provides a good foundation, particularly for the teaching of number work.
- The pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to use or apply their mathematical skills to everyday situations.
- The use of information and communication technology skills in the subject is weak.

Commentary

67. Pupils' grasp of number work and their knowledge of shape and measures are both secure. They achieve well, both in lessons and over time, and this has led to improved attainment for most pupils. Although the pupils' number knowledge is well developed, they do not have sufficient opportunities to relate it to, or use their skills with, everyday problem-solving. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its national test results and maintained the good achievement of the pupils.
68. The pupils' standards of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 meet those expected nationally. In National Curriculum tests, the results have risen generally at both key stages, but this year the boys did not do as well as the girls by the end of Year 2. The oldest pupils now reach higher standards compared to those found in similar schools across the country. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress. The pupils show how they work out their number problems and the teachers are good at expecting them to explain their thinking. Pupils are not always given the chance to relate what they have learnt to everyday situations. For example, in an otherwise well-taught lesson in Year 6, the pupils learnt about measuring angles and made progress in learning the technique. The teacher effectively explained how to use a protractor, but did not relate this to any potential practical use. The pupils enjoy their number work and are motivated to succeed. For example, as a warm-up activity in a Year 4 class, the pupils played a number game called 'buzz off hairy legs' which developed their speed of calculation and multiplication skills. In the younger classes the pupils also generally achieve well in their number work. In a Year 2 class, the pupils were confident with calculations using subtraction, both verbally and written in their books. Some of the higher-attaining pupils did find having to write their answers in a certain way confusing, although they clearly knew the answers to the calculations. Several of the pupils in the oldest classes have help from an additional teaching assistant in mathematics. This is helping those pupils to achieve well.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good and effective. Good teaching, particularly in the oldest classes, is enabling pupils to learn well, and make good progress. Teachers have appropriate guidance and follow a detailed scheme of work that is recommended by the local education authority. This gives systematic approaches to teaching and is used instead of the nationally-produced numeracy strategy. The scheme works well generally, although does not always promote more innovative approaches to the subject. For example, the school has had a focus on problem solving during the year, but this is not a sufficiently regular feature of work pupils are asked to do or linked to work in other subject areas. The management of pupils in classes is good and as a result, pupils' behaviour and concentration are well developed. They work well and are willing to learn. The teachers' regular assessment and monitoring, together with the school's analysis of test results, are good. The resulting information helps teachers refine their planning and focus on areas that need more work. Resources are adequate for lessons and the scheme of work has the necessary supply of workbooks readily available. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is underdeveloped, although the computer suite and additional resources in classes enable a minimum level of use to take place. The school has noted this as an area for development.
70. The co-ordinator has led the subject well and effectively enthused staff to the extent that a number have attended training in their own time to improve their subject knowledge. His analysis of assessments and test results and his monitoring of teaching and work completed by the pupils have led to improved practice and the consequent rise in standards. He has made a good start in addressing the apparent differences between boys and girls attainment in the younger classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. The opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory overall although not systematically planned into the rest of the curriculum. Pupils use their

skills in science lessons when they lay out work in information within tables and charts for example and younger pupils use their mathematical information to draw simple graphs on the computer. Good use is made of pupils' knowledge of shapes in art teaching in Year 2.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils' knowledge of science is good.
- Good links between science and other subjects enhance learning; however the use of ICT to enhance pupils' understanding of science has not yet been fully developed.
- Pupils' attitudes to science are good.
- Pupils' opportunities to develop skills of scientific enquiry through experimentation are too limited.
- Girls achieve as well as boys in the subject.

Commentary

72. Pupils enter the school with well below average understanding of the world about them and underdeveloped social skills. Scrutiny of pupils' test results, their current work and observations in lessons indicate that pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are comparable to those attained nationally. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number for whom English is not the first language, achieve well and make good progress in learning. This has been reflected in results from national tests over recent years, which have shown a strong upward trend in the attainment of Year 6 pupils. The 2002 results in science were very high and although there was a decline in results in 2003, pupils in that Year 6 attained standards that are still above average when compared to similar schools nationally.
73. In lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning are both good overall throughout the school. The most successful lessons were observed in Year 2 and Year 3 when teachers were secure in their subject knowledge and taught science through experimentation, focusing on building up skills of enquiry and prediction. As a result, pupils displayed interest and enthusiasm, and achievement was good. Year 3 pupils made good progress in developing their understanding of magnetism during a well-taught lesson because of the way the teacher used a range of practical activities to enhance understanding of magnetic attraction. There was an emphasis on the correct use of specific vocabulary, and the teacher's good explanations ensured that pupils fully understood scientific terms. The lesson was briskly paced; expectations were high and teaching methods effective. As a result, pupils achieved well. In lessons where teaching was less successful, although still satisfactory, the emphasis was limited to pupils learning facts and building up knowledge about different aspects of science rather than being given structured opportunities to engage in practical activities in order to find out more. The school is aware that opportunities for pupils to engage in practical work are still too limited in some year groups.
74. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively through lesson observations and statutory tests results are analysed in order to highlight strengths and weaknesses in subject delivery. Assessment is good and is used well to track overall pupil progress. The coordinator has helped to build up the confidence and subject knowledge of teachers through leading regular staff training. Staff are confident with those aspects of the curriculum related to factual knowledge but staff expertise in teaching the skills associated with scientific enquiry are still inconsistent.

75. Science is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subject areas, especially literacy and numeracy, but there is presently only limited use of ICT to support learning in the subject. Resources for teaching all aspects of science are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils know about the features and use of computers and the way they can speed up tasks.
- The computer suite and additional computers provide effective resource for learning.
- Pupils in the oldest classes have a confident knowledge of word-processing and making simple presentations using computer software.
- The opportunities to use ICT skills within other subjects are relatively limited.

Commentary

76. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) meet the national expectation. The oldest pupils talk about the use of computers and technology with an appropriate degree of confidence. They know about basic and more advanced features of word processing such as cutting, pasting, and how to refine their work. By Year 6, the pupils know the significant features of the Internet and how 'search engines' help locate information. They know how computers can also help them solve problems more quickly, such as calculating numbers quickly on a spreadsheet program for example. In a well-taught Year 6 lesson, the pupils quickly grasped the concepts of how to construct simple presentation slides and how they can be linked together to form simple presentations. The teacher enthusiastically outlined the task and then allowed the pupils to 'have a go'. This improved their motivation and interest. In another well-taught lesson in Year 4, the pupils learnt how to enter simple information and produce graphs or pie charts to represent it. They knew the functions of the program confidently and could explain why different charts might be best. The teacher had a good balance between demonstrating what she wanted done and in giving enough time for the pupils to practise their skills. This helped them to make progress and be ready for the next session.
77. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are on track to meet the expected levels. They readily talk about the functions of the computer and they know how to use the mouse, delete information, and enter a password. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher confidently led the activity and her good subject knowledge helped to dispel any difficulties the pupils had. In discussion with the younger pupils, most know how computers are helpful in everyday life such as domestic machines, for example. Their past work also indicates that they know how to use simple drawing programs to design a bus or a draw a crocodile, for example.
78. Much of the work covered is based on the local authority published scheme, which gives a basic coverage of skills and a step-by-step overview of activities. This supports most of the teachers well. The teaching was good in the lessons seen in Years 2, 4 and 6, but one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in a Year 3 class. The lessons are planned appropriately to include pupils of different abilities and make appropriate use of the resources in the suite. In the one unsatisfactorily taught lesson, the pupils did not make sufficient progress when trying to combine graphics and text. Too many became restless waiting for the teacher to help with difficulties and there were no clear ways for this to be managed.
79. The development of a computer suite since the last inspection has enhanced the provision and lessons are regularly timetabled for its use. This is an improvement in the level of resources. This is supplemented by classes having additional computers. For example, there is a laptop computer linked to a LCD projector available for staff to use. This is in addition to the activities planned in the suite. There is a suitable scheme of work in the subject. However, no use was

made of the mobile computer and LCD projector and comparatively little ICT was seen in use within other subjects during the inspection

80. The co-ordinator has worked appropriately to support teachers with materials and guidance along with the maintenance of the computer suite. There is an appropriate plan of action to develop the suite further with additional resources such as interactive whiteboards, improved computer programmes, and digital cameras.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Although a sound start has been made to the wider use of ICT, this is still relatively limited and there is scope for much greater use of ICT as both a teaching and a learning tool. The pupils use their word-processing skills to write stories and display work effectively and older pupils use simple CD-roms to find out information about project work in history, for example. The pupils also benefit from the teachers using information programs in science. For example, a program demonstrated the inner workings of the heart. Younger pupils use simple art programs to draw objects and animals.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

82. Inspectors observed only one lesson in geography and two lessons in history so it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. However, both subjects were sampled through an examination of pupils' work from Year 3 to Year 6 and also teachers' planning, which confirms that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught in sufficient depth. There is every indication from the available evidence that standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were judged to be broadly average in both subjects.
83. Pupils enjoy their work in both history and geography and display an eagerness to learn. During a celebration assembly, younger pupils talked about toys being new, older or oldest to impressed parents. Year 3 pupils worked with enthusiasm in a well-taught lesson when learning about the origins of Dagenham, whilst pupils in Year 6 increased their understanding of Britain after the Second World War and how life has changed as a result of modern mechanisation in industry and farming. However, there was little evidence of pupils being given opportunities to further their studies through out-of-school visits to places of interest and this remains an area for future development.
84. Subject co-ordination in both subjects is sound and resources are satisfactory, easily accessed and used well to enhance curricular provision.

Religious education (RE)

The overall provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is now a well-planned scheme of work.
- The activities are well matched to the interests of the pupils.
- The pupils enjoy the subject.
- The quantity of recorded work is too little.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet developed.

Commentary

85. Since the last inspection, reasonable progress has been made in improving the provision in the subject and addressing this key issue for improvement. The school now follows the locally agreed syllabus and scheme of work that provides a suitable and well-planned series of activities. The pupils now have a broader knowledge of a range of faiths, although this is generally not to a deep level.
86. The pupils throughout the school reach the standards outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve appropriately, and make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons was satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was seen in Year 6. The activities are supplemented by themes in assemblies, led sometimes by outside visitors such as the local clergy. The school's personal, social, health and education programmes also make appropriate contributions to the pupils' understanding. The pupils study different religions and their meanings but not always to a deeper level. In Year 3 work for example, they discussed the role that an altar plays in religions and how it is possible to create your own altar or 'special place'. Their pictures of special items included teddy bears and pictures of the family. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils had a thoughtful debate about Christianity, and were keen to pursue the question of who made God. The oldest pupils explored their own feelings related to the theme of Remembrance Day. The class teacher explored the theme of war and its impact. The pupils' responses, although brief, were mature and thoughtful. In the younger classes, the pupils are also made aware of different religions, although in discussion, they were not confident in recalling any major differences between them. Some remembered that the Christian's holy book is the Bible and the Koran related to another religion but did not know which one. The pupils' knowledge is supplemented appropriately by studying the different festivals such as harvest and the origins of Christmas celebrations.
87. Little recorded work was seen or available, and the oldest pupils had completed none this term. The planning and scheme of work incorporates a significant focus on discussion and reflection. The pupils did recall their debates and discussions with some confidence. However, their discussions and possible conclusions are not noted, which reduces the potential learning and development of themes which can be displayed or referred to later.
88. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory, although the monitoring of teaching and learning is a weaker aspect. This has been noted for further development. The coordinator has worked hard to produce support material and guidance for staff.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and teaching of specific techniques.
- Pupils enjoy art and collaborate effectively to produce work of a high standard.
- Good standards of display of artwork across the school exemplify high standards.

Commentary

89. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. By Year 2, pupils have experience of observational drawing and can draw and colour their own self-portraits very successfully. Pupils observe accurately and use a variety of techniques to accurately draw the shapes of different parts of the eye, for example. They have good knowledge of colour-mixing and experiment effectively to portray skin tones. Pupils are able to select from a wide variety of materials to portray the colour and texture of hair effectively. Other pupils are able to identify shapes in photographs of buildings and make accurate drawings using those shapes from a number of different perspectives. Pupils are able to select from previous experience the most appropriate technique to use. For example, pupils can shade in pencil and smudge with charcoal to represent the shadow of a building. Older pupils in Year 4 are able to make simple analyses of the artist Hundertwasser's techniques and use them effectively in their own work based on a map of their journey home. In Year 6 pupils make very effective wire and paper sculptures of moving figures with considerable skill and attention to detail. Across the school, pupils' high quality artwork, in a variety of media from pencil and charcoal drawing to watercolour, sculpture and collage, is sensitively displayed to celebrate pupils' work, motivate others and enhance the visual environment.
90. Teaching and learning are good overall, enabling pupils to achieve well in lessons. Teachers in all lessons seen have good subject knowledge and their expectations are high. Activities challenge pupils appropriately and the teaching of specific techniques is skilful and well timed for maximum impact on pupils' work. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with different techniques, show their work in progress to others and talk about the approaches used. Questioning skills are effective and open-ended questions to focus pupils on the reasons for choosing a particular medium or approach to the work in hand deepen learning. Verbal marking of work and feedback to pupils is well used by them to undertake improvements and enhances self-esteem. In all art lessons seen, pupils were able to work well collaboratively. They shared resources and helped each other in a very mature manner.
91. The leadership of art and design is satisfactory overall but the subject leader has very good subject knowledge. She has reorganised resources for the subject and supported individual colleagues effectively. There have been few whole-school staff development activities but the subject leader has clear ideas for what is needed. She has not undertaken any observation of teaching or formal monitoring of standards of pupils' work but has a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses throughout the school from informal monitoring of pupils' displayed artwork.

Design and technology

92. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in design and technology. Pupils' work in Year 1 and Year 4 and photographs of pupils' previous work were sampled. These included the whole-school challenge to create a structure using marshmallows and spaghetti. The younger pupils enjoyed using their cutting skills to make a fruit salad and the Year 4 pupils knew about different alarms, especially alarm lights and lighthouses. However, it is evident from work sampled that pupils need more experience in the design aspect of this subject. Leadership of the subject is not effective which is the same position as at the previous inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection and standards are in line with the national expectation across the school.
- Teaching and learning are good overall across the school.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for music is high.

- The involvement of the local authority's Community Music Service in Years 4 and 5 is having a very positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The standards of singing are high when classes are taught by specialist music service teachers but only in line with age-related expectations in other settings.

Commentary

93. Standards in music are in line with the national expectation by the time pupils reach Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were significant variations in standards between different year groups. Standards of singing are in line with age-related expectations but higher in those classes where some teaching is undertaken by members of the local authority's community music service. The school is proud of its choir but does not make enough use of assemblies and other large-group settings to promote singing.
94. The involvement of the Community Music Service in Years 4 and 5, through an externally-funded project, is having a major impact on the quality of provision, pupils' achievement and teachers' own professional development. All pupils in those year groups have chosen to learn an instrument from a wide variety of string, woodwind or brass instruments which they take home and practise in addition to their lessons. Pupils talk openly about how proud they and their parents are that they are learning an instrument. In all lessons taught by external music specialists, teachers remain with their classes as part of their professional development and are asked to continue aspects of the teaching later in the week.
95. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall when lessons are taught by class teachers and very good when taught by music service specialists. This has a strong positive impact on pupils' achievement. The youngest pupils in Year 1 achieve well when rehearsing and performing in groups with un-tuned percussion and are effectively using their knowledge of tempo and pitch. Those in classes for older pupils are using their well-developed collaborative skills to compose and perform using tuned and un-tuned instruments. Pupils in classes taught by music specialists are achieving well in their understanding of scales and musical notation and technical vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 3 taught by their class teacher could recognise ostinato in the rhythmic patterns they were being asked to use. However, Year 5 pupils, in response to very good teaching, were engaged in a lively class discussion as to whether a particular ostinato was rhythmic or melodic before performing one of their own.
96. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has only recently been appointed but has already been supporting colleagues. She has good subject knowledge and has a sound understanding of the priorities for development.

Physical education (PE)

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national expectations but have improved since the last inspection.
- The improved number and range of after school sporting activities is having a positive impact on pupils' skills and attitudes.

Commentary

97. Pupils achieve standards in physical education by the ages of seven and eleven which are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations at age eleven. Pupils enjoy their learning and respond well to the activities within the lessons.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. From the lessons observed, discussions with the co-ordinator and viewing planning, it is evident that all strands of the subject, including swimming, are effectively covered. This term, the Year 5 pupils visit the local swimming pool each week. Since the last inspection, the playground markings have been improved and this area is now effectively used by teachers. In a rugby lesson, the pupils enjoyed practising their skills using the running track and were able to travel with the rugby ball and pass successfully. Other classes used the PE hall for dance lessons which provided the space for Year 1 pupils to march to the rhythm of the beat around the hall and for Year 4 pupils to explore different dance movements, imagining they were dancing in a variety of different footwear. The range and number of after-school activities is good and helps pupils to practise their skills and further develop their team spirit. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
99. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is keen and encourages staff to take advantage of staff training provided by the LEA. She has audited resources for the subject and increased the range of equipment used to support the teaching of PE.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

100. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school sees pupils' personal and social development as an important part of its work and has good curriculum planning for the subject. It incorporates drugs awareness as well as sex education and teaching resources to counteract bullying. Each class has a set time during the week for personal, social, and health education and this is used well to promote the caring and inclusive ethos of the school. Some Year 1 pupils benefit from having extra Circle Time activities led by a visitor over a number of weeks. These are designed to help them improve their social skills, self-esteem, and confidence. The school promotes its policy well, and it is having a positive effect on the pupils. For example, around the school, they are polite, respectful, and helpful to each other. The work of the school council also develops the pupils' social awareness very effectively.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
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	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

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

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