

INSPECTION REPORT

VIRGINIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bethnal Green, London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100926

Headteacher: Ms V Fraher

Lead inspector: Mrs P Silcock

Dates of inspection: 27th - 29th January 2004

Inspection number: 258279

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:	216
School address:	Virginia Road Bethnal Green
Postcode:	E2 7NQ
Telephone number:	(0207) 739 6195
Fax number:	(0207) 739 1685
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Horncastle
Date of previous inspection:	5 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Virginia Primary is of average size compared to other primary schools. Two hundred and sixteen pupils are on roll, twenty-five in the Nursery full-time. Children start Nursery in the September or January after their third birthday. Those who are four in the autumn term transfer to the Reception class in September. Children reaching four in the spring or summer terms start Reception in January. Most children attend Nursery full-time after a settling in period. Some enter Reception from a neighbouring Nursery school. Whilst the full range of attainment is present on entry, most achieve well below expectations in communication, language and literature, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school serves a mainly Muslim population. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic origin with 91 per cent having family origins in Bangladesh. Approximately 97.5 per cent of all pupils have English as an additional language - a very high percentage. The main languages other than English are Sylheti, Bangla, Vietnamese/Chinese and Somali/Urdu. Around 50 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals - also a high figure. Approximately 18 per cent are on the Code of Practice register of special educational needs with 1.5 per cent having statements of special educational needs. These figures are broadly in line with national averages. Needs range from specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech and communication difficulties, hearing impairment and other (medical) problems, but the most prevalent are moderate learning difficulties. The school receives funding through 'Excellence in Cities', and a Learning Mentor works with pupils recognised as needing support for their emotional, social and behavioural needs. The school has strong links with three City of London firms through the 'Business in Education' partnership scheme. Links benefit reading and the development of information and communication technology skills for targeted pupils. The school received a Schools Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2002 in recognition of good strides made in raising standards over three years. There is a relatively high movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of entry, especially after Year 2. Of the current Year 6, 60 per cent did not start at Virginia. The school has difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality teaching staff. Recently, it has benefited from Private Finance Initiatives funding with substantial improvements made to the interior décor of a large part of the building and, in particular, to the accommodation for Nursery children.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Lead inspector	Mathematics History Religious education Music Citizenship English as an additional language
9420	David Martin	Lay inspector	
11976	Heather Toynbee	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Geography Art and design
23354	Evelyn Adams	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Considerable challenge is met energetically and there is a collective determination to raise standards. This determination owes much to the very good leadership of the acting headteacher. The school's ethos for learning is very good. The local community and business partnerships are rich resources for extending learning in and out of classrooms. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in statutory tests at seven and 11 are rising.
- The acting headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy and other senior managers.
- School leadership has excellent commitment to equality of opportunity for *all* pupils.
- Most teaching is good or better and its quality affects pupils' very good attitudes to learning and behaviour in and out of classrooms. Teachers plan well for individuals' learning needs.
- The school copes remarkably well with staffing instability, though this instability affects pupils' learning adversely at times.
- Although pupils with special educational needs are well taught, the management and leadership of provision are unsatisfactory.
- There are excellent procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Financial management is very good, as is the day-to-day running of the school.
- Governors bring good expertise to their work. They know the school's strengths and where improvements can be made and hold it accountable for standards reached.
- Nursery resources are unsatisfactory and Reception children have limited outdoor access.

The school has made **good** improvements since its last inspection in 1998. The teaching day is now extended. Curricular provision has been enriched and greater stress given to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Provision for information and communication technology is better and parents are more involved in school life. The school knows curriculum co-ordinators' roles remain underdeveloped.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' **achievement** is **good**. The school's 'value added' rating for its work with pupils between Years 2 and 6 is well above the national average. Nevertheless, standards reached at 11 were well below those expected in statutory tests in English and science and broadly average in mathematics compared to those reached by pupils in all schools in 2003. These standards do vary (as seen in the table above). More importantly, they are generally rising. The trend over time is above the national trend.

By the end of Reception, most children should reach the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. But, as most children's attainment in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and

understanding of the world is very low when they start Nursery, only about half is judged likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in these areas by the end of the Foundation Stage.

By Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are as expected when pupils work with familiar adults, but writing is below average. Poor writing skills affect work in science adversely, although pupils do well in practical tasks. Able pupils and some of average ability achieve in line with expectations in reading and mathematics. By Year 6, such pupils at least fulfil expectations in English, mathematics and science. Across the school, the high number of pupils with English as an additional language affects standards overall, notably in writing. Similarly, significant movement of pupils in and out of school during the school year affects standards reached by age 11.

From the Nursery upwards, pupils' personal development is **very good**. It is supported by **very good** provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils like helping others and taking responsibilities (for example, when they are elected to the School Council). They arrive promptly and **attendance** is **good** because of measures the school takes.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** because most teaching is good or better and because pupils are cared for and supported. In a very few instances, teaching was found unsatisfactory. All pupils benefit from high levels of care, guidance and support from the adults who work with them. Teachers are skilled at making provision accessible to pupils with special educational needs and to many bilingual pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English. Teaching assistants, too, are well trained for their work. Some pupils benefit from programmes such as the Further Literacy Strategy and Springboard Maths aimed at improving their skills. Very good use is made of visits to places of interest to enrich learning. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well provided for, although resources in the Nursery are unsatisfactory. Reception children are housed on the first floor of the building and this affects easy access to outdoor play.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **good**, as is its management and governance. The very good leadership of the acting headteacher commands respect from staff, governors and parents. Expertise amongst governors has helped the school spend wisely and steer it through a deficit budget. They are committed to school improvement and to raising standards. The school has already picked out areas for improvement (outlined below) and is taking action with many.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Almost all parents have very positive views. They see the school as helping their children learn in ways that interest them and get along together harmoniously. They see a lack of consistency in homework setting and would like pupils to learn swimming before Year 6. Pupils are usually happy at school. They enjoy their work and feel valued, although a few say that adults do not always really listen to their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the leadership and management of special educational needs.
- Improve teaching to bring *all* in line with best practice.
- Raise standards across subjects but especially in writing.
- Develop curriculum co-ordinators' roles further.
- Improve resources in the Foundation Stage and access to outdoor play for Reception children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Trends over time in national tests for seven and 11-year-olds are **above** the national trend. Across the age-range, pupils' achievement is **good**, including that of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language¹. Standards are **below average** in the Foundation Stage for learning and Years 1 and 2 relative to pupils' ages and abilities because they are frequently hampered by limited English language skills. Pupils' **good** progress in these leads to **average** standards by Year 6. A significant number of pupils leave or join classes during each school year, especially after Year 2, which adversely affects standards overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards reached by seven and 11-year-olds in statutory tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are rising.
- From the Nursery on, pupils do well relative to their age and capability. They make good strides in learning.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and most are set to reach relevant goals by the end of the Reception year.
- By this time, however, a significant number are judged unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals in most other areas.
- Whilst standards in Year 2 are below average overall, pupils have competent skills in mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Pupils in Year 6 reach good standards in speaking and listening, helping them do well, orally, in subjects across the curriculum.
- The school's 'value added' score is well above the national average for gains made by pupils moving from Years 2 to 6.

Commentary

1. Almost all children start learning English as an additional language at the start of their schooling in the Nursery. Most are assessed as attaining well below expectation at this age in all areas but notably in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Inspection evidence suggests that perhaps half the children will reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year in these areas with a similar number likely to succeed in creative development. The poor competence in English of most children on entry to Nursery obviously affects school learning. Similarly, a limited exposure to play and activities associated with books and stories, imaginative games, number and learning about the world beyond the family has an adverse impact on what most of them know, understand and can do in the classroom. Children make a very good start to their schooling in the Foundation Stage, especially in learning crucial early skills in English and in those linked to personal, social and emotional development. Indeed, most are judged likely to achieve the relevant goals in this area by the end of the Reception year. Children also acquire important physical skills by handling tools for different purposes and by playing on equipment outdoors or in physical education lessons in the school hall. Consequently, and even though Reception children have limited access to outdoor play, most are judged likely to reach goals of physical development.

¹Whilst it is recognised that pupils learning English as an additional language may be competent in more than one language other than English, and may have literacy as well as oral skills in their first language(s), for ease of reference these pupils will sometimes be referred to as 'bilingual' learners.

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

reading	14.8 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.6 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.6 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

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

- As seen in the table, standards in reading show gains over the previous year but they are not as good in writing and, especially, in mathematics. School results fall below those reached nationally in reading and writing and well below in mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils as reaching well below average standards in speaking and listening and below average in science at the expected Level 2. At this level, pupils did better than their peers in all schools in both reading and writing. Their poor test performance as shown in the table reflects the fact that not enough achieved at Level 3, especially in mathematics but also in writing. When results are compared to those of similar schools, pupils did better than their peers in reading and writing and were broadly in line in mathematics and science. Results vary year-on-year and have to be viewed with caution because the cohort of pupils is relatively small. Nevertheless, they are improving over time.
- Inspection evidence shows that standards in speaking and listening are broadly in line with those expected in Year 2 when pupils work with familiar adults. They are not confident about talking to visitors and explaining what they do, frequently relying on one or two-word answers in response to questions. Overall, standards in writing are below average, although more able pupils and some of average ability make reasonable attempts at tasks and can write at length. These pupils can spell simple words correctly but often do not, suggesting a lack of care. Similarly, handwriting can be neat and well formed, although it is frequently untidy. Pupils of more able and average ability also reach expected standards in reading and in mathematics. Less able pupils clearly benefit from adult help in mathematics and work at a level appropriate to their abilities. In science, standards of recording are below those expected. In a practical task in a lesson, however, pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to make a simple circuit was at least in line with what can be expected and they persisted at solving problems when things went wrong.
- Results over time show girls are better than boys in reading and writing, in line with national trends. Against the national trend (where boys perform a little better than girls), they also do better in mathematics. Inspection findings, however, showed no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in English, mathematics and science. Detailed information from the local education authority shows variable results with regard to girls' and boys' performance over time, with no clear trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.7 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.4 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The table shows results for 11-year-olds are not as good in the 2003 tests as in the previous year. Pupils reached well below the average in English and science compared to their peers in all schools, and were broadly in line with these peers in mathematics. Whilst pupils did significantly better than pupils nationally at the expected Level 4 in each test, they did not do well enough at Level 5, with too many not meeting expectations - in English especially but also in science. The cohort was small, so results, as for younger pupils, need to be viewed with

caution. Evidence also shows that a significant proportion of Year 6 last year was on the Code of Practice register of special needs, which affected overall results adversely. When results are compared to those of similar schools, they are broadly in line in English, well above in mathematics and below in science. Over time, results are improving, although they vary year-on-year.

6. This varied picture is influenced by the make up of Year 6, which suffers from significant changes in Years 1 and 2 but more often later. For example, of the 60 per cent in the current Year 6 class who started after the usual time, 40 per cent entered during Year 4 or later. Most of these actually started either during Year 5 or during the current academic year, including in January, just prior to the inspection. A significant number of pupils coming in to school at this late stage have no English or are at a relatively early stage in its development. Inspection evidence shows these pupils are assessed effectively for support in learning English but their late start necessarily affects test performance. More generally, evidence reveals that able pupils and those of average ability at least meet expectations at this point in the school year in English and mathematics and, for practical work, in science. Recording of work for the latter does not reflect these pupils' understanding as seen in lessons. In booster classes, set for ability in all three core subjects, Year 6 pupils do well given their basic capabilities - better than might be expected. Overall, less able pupils, including those with special educational needs and statements of special educational need, achieve really well and succeed at least in line with their prior attainment.
7. Over time, girls do better than boys in tests in all three subjects at 11 but especially in English. Inspectors find no significant differences between boys' and girls' performance in these subjects. The booster classes mentioned above clearly augment provision and help raise standards in Year 6. Strategies for supporting pupils assessed as needing extra help with mathematics and reading in classes across the school are also well aimed at raising standards. This is seen, for instance, in the way pupils throughout Years 1 to 6 tackle written instructions in lessons and older pupils talk about the value of reading and their enjoyment in books of many kinds. Pupils also develop confidence in speaking and listening as they move through the school, and this is seen in many subjects, especially in Years 5 and 6, where pupils can generally explain in some detail the work they undertake and its purpose. However, written skills are not well developed other than for literacy. Pupils do not, for instance, consistently apply skills learned in literacy lessons to subjects such as geography or history, though Year 5's work in history provides a notable exception. Some work for religious education in Year 6 is also well written, although it is brief.
8. Pupils make good gains in learning, especially when they remain in school from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, whatever their ability, ethnicity or English language competence on entry. This is underscored by the well above average 'value added' judgement achieved by the school compared to the national average. Compared to like schools (where prior attainment criteria are applied), the school gives above average added value.
9. The new information and communication technology suite is already having an impact on standards. Year 2 pupils have competent computer skills. By 11, they already reach average standards and adeptly manipulate a mouse to move images around the screen when matching pictures to text. Good links are made across subjects with information and communication technology, as seen in Year 3, where links were made to mathematics and to art and design work on repeat patterns.
10. Standards in art and design and design and technology are average, relative to pupils' ages. In a Year 2 music lesson, standards were below those expected because pupils lacked sufficient skills in handling instruments. In Year 6, however, pupils reached satisfactory standards in their first attempt at group compositions, auguring well for their further development and the quality of their final versions. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils had satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Fire of London and how people lived at that time, but their recorded work was limited mainly to rather uninspiring worksheets. Year 6 pupils showed good knowledge

and understanding of why they learn about the past, when recalling history themes over several years. They could do this in some detail, helped by activities that stimulated their interest when they had visited places of historical interest such as the Ragged School Museum (“down the road”), linked to learning about Victorian times. Written work hardly exists so there is no significant record of pupils’ learning to support a firm judgement on standards. A similar picture is seen in geography, except that these older pupils do not have such extensive recall of work covered. In light of the small amount of evidence available, standards at both seven and 11 are judged below average in geography. Standards in religious education are average by 11. Pupils have a secure understanding of religious ideas and practices because many can relate new learning about different faiths to their personal knowledge and experience of the Muslim faith. The school’s stress on moral issues and differences between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ actions translates well to religious education studies. Because of time-tabling, no lessons were seen in physical education, either in Year 2 or Year 6, so judgements about standards are not made.

11. The school is now beginning to implement assessment and profiling systems recommended for children in the Foundation Stage for learning, following the local education authority’s recent introduction of these. It makes very good use of the detailed information from the local education authority showing its performance in statutory tests and teacher assessments, as well as in such matters as attendance, relative to the national and local picture. In addition, it analyses data from optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 to help inform decisions about support for individuals and groups, and target resources to best effect. The school sets ambitious targets for English, mathematics and science at 11. Targets at the expected Level 4 were missed in the latest English tests, although the margin represents only one pupil. Achievement at the higher Level 5, however, was not as good as predicted. Targets set in science were similarly missed but those for mathematics were exceeded at both expected and at higher levels.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attendance and punctuality are **good**. Their personal development is also **good**. Their attitudes to school and behaviour are **very good**. Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **very good** overall. This is a similar picture to that given in the previous report with improvements seen in attendance and provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults promote the school’s high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour in and out of classrooms in ways they understand. Adults are very good role models.
- Excellent procedures for ensuring good attendance impact on pupils’ achievement.
- From the Nursery upward, pupils’ positive attitudes to learning contribute towards good levels of achievement.
- Pupils of all ages make very good relationships with one another and with adults, because of the way adults consistently help them to work and play co-operatively.
- Pupils are very clearly aware of important social and moral values.
- Pupils understand their own cultures and they respect the values and beliefs of others.
- Whole-school assemblies provide a stimulating focal point for the school community and promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to very good effect.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and helping others. Members of the School Council from Years 1 to 6 take their responsibilities seriously and are very good advocates for their peers.

Commentary

12. This is an area of considerable strength, notwithstanding difficulties seen in a very small number of lessons where pupils became distracted because they did not properly understand the tasks they were to do. Much more commonly, all pupils are attentive in lessons and work

well, independently and with others. In Nursery and Reception classes, they concentrate on self-chosen or adult-directed activities for long periods. In Years 1 to 6, they most frequently pay attention to their teacher and are eager to participate in whole-class discussions. They organise themselves quickly for follow-up tasks and work hard on these, keeping to time-limits. They enjoy sharing the results of their work. This was illustrated at the end of a Year 6 music lesson, when pupils enjoyed listening to each group's composition, recorded on tape, taking pride in their own achievements. Very good behaviour and attitudes to work contribute markedly to the good progress seen in many lessons.

13. Pupils discuss and agree the 'golden rules' for their classes at the start of each school year, and these are prominently displayed. They see why they should keep rules. For instance, they follow rules for moving around the building very well, especially commendable given the numerous flights of stairs negotiated several times a day by children from the Reception class upwards. Pupils like to help others. Older pupils take responsibility for younger peers in the playground and appointed 'buddies' take care of a new member of a class in the classroom and outside. Several pupils new to the school just before and during the inspection week were smoothly absorbed into the school community because of adults' care about such matters and the way 'buddies' undertook their duties. The way delegates from Year 1 to Year 6 take part in School Council meetings is impressive. They contribute to agenda items, carefully take account of others' views (pupil and adult) and argue a case for their classes confidently. For example, in one meeting, a Year 2 girl pointed out toilets used at playtimes could not be locked, persisting with her case when an adult explained the safety reasons for this. After discussion, the pupil agreed to talk to the site manager about the problem and a Year 6 girl volunteered to help her.

14. No evidence of bullying or racism was seen during the inspection or during two prior visits. Indeed, the school is a harmonious community with very good relationships at all levels. Pupils' views on bullying and its nature vary, nonetheless. They show good knowledge and understanding of the school's policy and procedures when questioned, revealing, for example, that bullying in any form is not tolerated and what actions will follow from incidents being reported. Most spoken to said that procedures are usually followed, but a small number feel that some adults pay insufficient attention to what pupils say. At a meeting prior to the inspection, parents agreed unequivocally that racism is not an issue, saying very clearly that any such matter, however small, is dealt with promptly and thoroughly. Whilst it was agreed that bullying does happen from time to time, almost all present believed matters were dealt with in line with known procedures. They disagreed with a minority view that senior staff was not sufficiently involved.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.9
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
4	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
179	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0

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

15. Attendance continues to improve, including since the start of this school year. Whilst figures for the academic year 2002/03 are broadly in line with the national median, attendance is actually good given the school's context and its success at getting pupils to attend regularly and arrive on time. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of such matters and their potential impact on standards. Measures taken are judged exemplary, since it is difficult to see what more could be done. All parents at the pre-inspection meeting did not hesitate in saying they knew what the school expects and are reminded regularly about their responsibilities with regard to children attending and arriving punctually. Parents' support in this is good.
16. Strengths are seen in the very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is good. In religious education lessons and assemblies, pupils are effectively introduced to the 'deeper' meanings of life. For example, the theme for assemblies during the inspection week was "Investing in the future". A large image of an oak tree was projected onto a screen to remind pupils of the Jewish festival they had learned about, when trees are planted as a symbol for the future. At these times, they sing with great joy, touching the hearts of listening adults. In other lessons and activities, they are encouraged to appreciate the mystery and beauty of life. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils showed how thrilled they were at making their bulbs light up in the simple circuits they had constructed.
17. Adults are very good role models, consistently guiding behaviour and relationships so pupils can tell the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to think through the consequences of their actions and their effects on others. They have a good grasp of the main features of their own cultures and of the cultural diversity found in the wider community beyond the school. Just before the inspection, the school celebrated Chinese New Year and a display of pupils' work shows the consideration given to the festival's significance and customs associated with it. Nursery children used rice bowls in their play in the home corner and 'read' greetings from Chinese New Year cards. Older pupils take part in a local music festival with a strong multicultural emphasis, through song, dance and instrumental playing. Pupils are introduced to Britain's rich cultural heritage through visits to such places as the Tower of London, art galleries and museums, for reasons linked to classroom work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school's educational provision is **good**, due to the good or better quality teaching often seen throughout the school and the way pupils are cared for and supported. It is also owed to very good provision for extending the curriculum, with many visits to places of interest and visitors to school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is frequently of **good** or better quality throughout the school but especially in the Reception class and in Years 3, 5 and 6. Learning is also **good**, again most notably in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers promote equality of opportunity by planning for different learning needs; this planning and its implementation are excellent.
- Good or better teaching produces good learning in many lessons throughout the age range.
- Temporary measures taken to staff the Nursery work well. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall with very good and even excellent teaching in the Reception class.
- Whilst good or better teaching is sometimes seen in Years 1 and 2, it occurs most often in classes for older pupils where very good knowledge and understanding of the age-range informs teaching skills.
- A music specialist collaborates well with class teachers. She stimulates pupils with her own enjoyment of the subject so they are keen to succeed and work hard.
- In a few lessons judged unsatisfactory, teaching lacks sufficient focus. Pupils lose interest and behave inappropriately, affecting teaching and learning adversely.
- Good quality assessment information in the core subjects (especially in English and mathematics) means teachers in Years 1 to 6 can match planning to pupils' needs to good effect. Such assessment information is not available in other subjects.
- Teachers' assessment of children's learning for planning the 'next steps' in the Foundation Stage is good, with strengths evident in the Reception class.

Commentary

18. The table below shows the quality of teaching across the school. There are strengths in the Foundation Stage, where no teaching is less than satisfactory and some is good or (in the Reception class) even better. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is, again, not less than satisfactory with some good and very good teaching seen in a few lessons where teachers' subject confidence made the crucial difference. In Years 3 to 6, almost all lessons reached this high standard (80 per cent) and some excellent teaching was also seen. In Years 3, 5 and 6, teachers' expertise in managing pupils and stimulating interest in all subjects almost always gave an 'edge' to lessons in ways moving learning on at a good pace. In one case, a teacher had taken over Year 4 only days before the inspection began and was still in the process of finding out about the class and establishing his authority. In a very small number of lessons, he was observed having difficulties regaining pupils' attention because they found it hard to focus on each lesson's purpose and were losing interest.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (9%)	9 (27%)	10 (30%)	9 (27%)	2 (6%)	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.

19. Almost all parents expressed satisfaction with teaching. At their meeting, they said that staffing difficulties disrupt their children's learning at times but they know these difficulties arise from circumstances the school cannot control. They also believe teaching is good and serves children well. Pupils commonly express enjoyment about the work they do and this comes through in high levels of concentration. They make very good relationships with the adults who work with them, helping maintain their enthusiasm for learning. Three ex-pupils now at different stages of secondary education were keen to talk to inspectors. They said how much

they had benefited from their teaching at the school, and that this had affected their views about educational opportunities.

20. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge. Particular strengths are found in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, in the Reception year especially, and in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6. Strengths were also seen in the computer suite when a specialist teacher-consultant worked alongside class teachers in ways stimulating pupils' enthusiasm. They succeeded at tasks better than might be expected. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils' excitement at creating repeated patterns was palpable: high concentration was maintained throughout the lesson. Similarly, Year 4 pupils made real progress in building on movement skills in a good physical education lesson. The acting headteacher's specialist skills were channelled through an effective partnership with the class teacher. Elsewhere, too, pupils' learning benefited from the specialist input of a part-time music teacher. This was seen to particular advantage in an excellent Year 6 lesson when a class teacher and a teaching assistant made sure instructions were understood and followed. Everyone succeeded at demanding tasks, and groups were able to perform their first attempts at composition.
21. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan work appropriately for those with identified needs. So, pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs, including those with a statement of special need, are well catered for. Planning reflects priorities set out in pupils' individual education plans. Teaching assistants are well trained to support pupils and are deployed effectively throughout lessons. They sit close to pupils during whole-class sessions, checking pupils grasp points being made and participate alongside their peers. Subsequently, they help pupils with tasks and make sure they complete these to the best of their abilities, sharing outcomes with the class alongside everyone else. A particularly effective partnership between a teacher and assistant was seen in Year 3.
22. Teachers across the age-range make very good provision for the many pupils learning English as an additional language. Specialist teachers target learners at an early stage of English language acquisition. Teachers know, for instance, the importance of strong visual cues for pupils and the need to check their understanding of subject vocabulary, giving alternative explanations where vocabulary is new or unfamiliar. They also use 'talk partners' to great effect. This enables proficient English speakers to explain key points to less assured peers. It also at times promotes the learning of English through pupils' first language, since many share the same home languages. Some teachers and teaching assistants make very good use of their skills in community and home languages. For example, in a very good Year 1 mathematics lesson, a class teacher 'slipped' in and out of Sylheti to check pupils' understanding and a new teacher supporting in the lesson was similarly able to reinforce learning. As a result, pupils made very good progress and tackled follow-up tasks confidently.
23. In these better lessons, teachers keep a good pace and move learning on so pupils' interest and motivation is maintained. They make sure pupils understand a lesson's main objective and are clear about the work they have to do. Resources are well prepared and used effectively, as seen in a good Year 5 design and technology lesson when pupils explored the features of different carrier bags before designing their own, paying special attention to the strength of the handle. Teaching in booster classes for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science consolidates and extends pupils' learning in pursuit of raising standards very well. It is always at least good. Indeed, excellent teaching was seen in mathematics when a brisk pace was established from the start and pupils worked hard to meet a teacher's high expectations. Where teaching is only satisfactory, there is a tendency for questions of the 'guess what's in my head?' kind. Pupils become uncertain of themselves, often failing to supply a 'correct' answer. This was seen in a Year 2 history lesson, when pupils could not grasp how a gap between houses might help stop the fire of London from spreading. Eventually, the teacher realised that although pupils were working hard, their guesses were becoming increasingly random. Sensibly, the problem was left open for further investigation.

24. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. Very good marking is seen in mathematics in Year 6, when comments are closely linked to the work in hand and expectations of good presentation are made explicit. At times, pupils reply to questions or comments thoughtfully. Elsewhere, recognition is given to success and the difficulties overcome (as seen in Year 3), although marking mostly consists of 'ticks'. More frequently, marking is used to show work has been seen. It does not indicate how it can be improved. In some classes, notably Year 2, no attention is paid to poorly presented work.
25. Teachers have access to good assessment information in English and mathematics especially, but also in science, because detailed records and assessment data accompany pupils as they move to new classes at the start of each school year. New teachers can therefore build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills to get their next stage of schooling off to a good start. Assessment procedures in information and communication technology are being put in place. In other subjects, they are not yet developed and teachers make judgements about 'next steps' based on work covered and pupils' success at reaching planned learning objectives. Such judgements work well at a practical level but are not recorded formally against, for instance, levels set out in National Curriculum criteria.
26. Teachers stress the importance of reading as a main homework task, as evident in reading diaries commonly used across classes. One or two teachers were also seen to remind pupils they would be given homework at the end of lessons linked to what they had learned. Business partners who read with pupils each week focus on those who do not benefit from such reading at home. Homework books in Year 6 show pupils research news items of interest to them in connection with geography. They also do mathematics linked to classroom work. Entries in these books are few, however. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection perceived homework provision as inconsistent.

The curriculum

Curricular breadth for children in the Foundation Stage for learning is **very good**. It is **satisfactory** for pupils in Years 1 to 6. A **very good** range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning. Access to all aspects of the curriculum for pupils throughout the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are firmly in place.
- All pupils, regardless of age, ability, gender, ethnic or linguistic background, have full access to curricular provision.
- There are strengths in curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage for learning even though opportunities for outdoor play in the Reception class are limited.
- Many aspects of the curriculum have improved since the previous inspection and there are now schemes of work for all subjects.
- Pupils are prepared well for each stage of education.
- Opportunities for enriching the curriculum through clubs, visits and visitors to school are very good - an improvement since the last inspection.
- There is very good support for pupils with English as an additional language.
- Teachers and support staff are well matched in their abilities and qualifications to the curriculum, with strengths seen in the Foundation Stage and classes for older pupils.
- Although resources in the Nursery are judged unsatisfactory, a range of new equipment is on order.
- There is no wheelchair access to the upper levels of the school. Space for games, such as football, is very limited.

Commentary

27. The school has a satisfactorily broad curriculum, which includes all areas of the National Curriculum and religious education for Years 1 to 6. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are securely in place. The total time given to teaching across this age-range is now at least in line with the national average, marking an improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged too short. The curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception classes, too, has much improved. There are now very good curricular opportunities for these youngest children across all areas of learning. However, the school admits continuing problems with access to outdoor play for those in the Reception class. Since their classroom is on the first floor of the building, indoor/outdoor activities are hard to organise so as to complement each other, in line with current guidance. Children cannot choose when to play outside. In spite of this, the school operates a fully inclusive curricular policy, ensuring that all pupils have access to all available curricular activities.
28. Improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection have had a positive effect on curricular provision and statutory requirements are now fully met, including that for the act of collective worship. All pupils have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils go swimming, so requirements for physical education are fulfilled. Schemes of work for all subjects are also in place. A whole-school curriculum framework plainly shows what aspects of each subject are taught to each year group throughout the school year. Pupils can acquire and build on necessary skills, knowledge and understanding over time without undue repetition or overlapping of a subject's content. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. However, time for non-core subjects such as art and design and geography is short because the school priority is raising standards in core subjects, particularly with regard to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Limited planning for the other subjects affects the depth with which content can be studied. In part, this problem is addressed by the organisation of special days or weeks where art and design, for instance, take priority. There is an 'Arts Week' in the summer term after statutory tests are finished.
29. There is very good support for pupils for whom English is not their first language. In addition to support from specialist staff targeted on those at an early stage of acquiring English, pupils benefit from staff members with languages matched to theirs. For example, a class teacher, a nursery nurse and a number of teaching assistants speak Bengali and Sylheti as well as English. Their ability to switch codes from one language to another, gives children full access to the curriculum and helps them (especially in the early years) feel more confident about their time in school.
30. While provision for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs is only satisfactory overall, good features are seen in the way teachers match planning to these pupils' individual education plans. Additional support is deployed well so pupils take a full part in planned activities. A Learning Mentor ensures pupils targeted as needing support for behavioural and/or emotional difficulties can work productively alongside their peers. At times, the mentor works with individuals outside the classroom, so that part of a lesson is missed. Pupils identified for support through an intervention programme (such as the Early Literacy Strategy and Springboard Maths) also miss parts of lessons. Withdrawal from classrooms is not ideal, but the mentoring and intervention programmes are carefully structured. They help ensure pupils concerned do well in areas where they have problems and can therefore participate in classroom work in ways otherwise not possible.
31. Pupils have good opportunities to join many after-school clubs, some run by teachers or other staff members and some by outside paid tutors. One former pupil was fulsome in praising a teacher who had successfully introduced him to chess, affecting his self-esteem enormously. A very good range of visits is arranged both to places in the locality and further afield, as outlined above. These are linked closely to themes covered in lessons so they extend pupils' learning as well as their experiences beyond school. The school takes excellent advantage of free access to public transport for such purposes. Financial support from a charitable trust

means that every Year 6 pupil can go on a residential field study visit to Suffolk during the summer term. Visitors also make a valued contribution to provision. Business partners from three City of London firms talk with great enthusiasm and affection about their weekly visits to work with pupils on reading and on developing information and communication technology skills.

32. Children in the Foundation Stage for learning are very well prepared for later schooling. In particular, they benefit from the stress given to their personal, social and emotional development. They are assured learners by the time they enter Year 1. Older pupils are also well prepared for transfer to secondary schooling because of their good grounding in literacy and numeracy and in their attitudes to work and to each other. Such grounding stands them in good stead for the later phase.
33. Whilst there are difficulties recruiting and retaining good quality teaching staff, there is nevertheless a good match between teachers' professional capabilities and the curriculum, with good expertise found across subjects. A part-time music specialist also makes a strong contribution to music teaching. A good number of well-trained teaching assistants support teachers effectively.
34. In recent times, school accommodation has improved considerably. It now satisfactorily meets the needs of the school. However, there is no wheelchair access to the upper levels of the building and, as stated, children in Reception class have no direct access to outdoor play areas. Indeed, outdoor space is altogether limited, which has an impact on provision in physical education - for football, for example. On the plus side, there are a number of non-classroom areas in the building that usefully house group work and can store resources or be used by parents. The school community is thrilled with its newly acquired information and communication technology suite, which considerably enhances this area of the curriculum.
35. Resources, generally, match demands across the age-range. However, the school knows that the quality and quantity of resources in the Nursery are unsatisfactory and that this affects children's learning in some areas. For instance, the home corner is not sufficiently stimulating for role-play and some books are rather well used. However, a solution to these matters is well in hand. A suitable range of relevant new equipment is ordered and expected imminently, signifying a good start to improving provision.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff members know pupils really well. Pupils have access to good support and guidance from the Nursery upwards.
- Pupils make very good relationships with adults.
- Pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs are well supported by teachers and support staff but systems for identifying such pupils and monitoring their progress lack rigour.
- The School Council is an effective means for ensuring pupils contribute to school affairs.
- Although pupils enjoy school, some feel that adults do not pay sufficient attention to their views.

Commentary

36. The care, welfare, health and safety of all pupils is central to school provision. This is evident even in the way current staffing difficulties have been dealt with, placing pupils' interests to the fore. All relevant policies are in place, including those for race equality. The school is undertaking an extensive audit of its provision for race equality to make sure it complies with all aspects of current legislation, in line with local education authority guidance.

37. Throughout the school, pupils make very good relationships with adults. Because adults know them well, they have good advice and guidance, especially on matters linked to their personal development. Procedures for child protection are securely in place with two named members of staff - the acting headteacher and co-ordinator for special educational needs. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken In-service training to update her expertise and has disseminated what she has learned to staff. Excellent procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality mean that unforeseen pupil absence is detected and followed up promptly. The school receives very good support from an outside agency in monitoring this aspect of its work and following up where there is cause for concern.
38. Thorough systems ensure the monitoring of pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics, with similar approaches being implemented for science and information and communication technology. Regular assessments of pupils' progress in key skills, such as number and reading, allow those in need of extra help to get support via one of several intervention programmes, which are kept under review. For example, early literacy, additional literacy and further literacy support programmes are organised in light of assessment information. They embrace a good number of pupils across the age-range. Mostly, these are pupils with English as an additional language thought likely to benefit from an extra 'push' towards the next level of attainment. Staff implementing these programmes are well trained. Indeed, all support teachers and teaching assistants have skills well matched to the work they do. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need, are well supported inside as well as outside classrooms, as appropriate. However, systems for identifying and tracking pupils with special educational needs lack rigour and are unsatisfactory - a problem the school itself has pinpointed and is tackling vigorously.
39. Pupils with English as an additional language are assessed, in line with the latest guidance, for their competence in English language skills on entry to school and then each term subsequently. Their progress in English is monitored and recorded so that the limited specialist teaching support available can be targeted most effectively. The co-ordinator for Minority Ethnic Achievement and senior managers have a very good grasp of the need for sensitivity and care when considering whether a bilingual pupil has special educational needs. For example, they know the importance of assessing pupils in their first language and gaining a thorough knowledge and understanding of parents' views.
40. Induction arrangements for children in the Nursery and those pupils entering Years 1 to 6 during the school year are good. The Learning Mentor, whose main responsibilities are for pupils with behavioural and/or emotional difficulties, helps these late entrants. The 'buddy' system, whereby a pupil is delegated by a class teacher to befriend a new pupil, works well, although the school sees a need to develop the system further.
41. The School Council provides really excellent opportunities for class delegates to air their peers' views, as already outlined. As this involves only a small number of pupils directly, the school has experimented with appointing different delegates each term. Since younger pupils, especially, have found this difficult to cope with, the school has reverted to yearly appointments. Still, it recognises the need to extend the way in which pupils are consulted about school life, though some pupils consider their views do not always get enough attention.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with its parents. Its links with the community are **very good**. Those with other schools and educational institutions are **satisfactory**. Judgements about the quality of provision were not made in the last inspection report although, from the picture given, it appears there has been much improvement since then.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is strongly committed to furthering its partnership with parents and has made good strides since the last inspection.
- It values parents' views and seeks these strenuously, acting on findings where practicable.
- Parents have positive views of the school. Almost all see it as a good school. They believe staff know children well and want them to succeed.
- Parents are given good quality information on their children's work and how they can help the children at home.
- Annual reports on children's progress lack consistency.
- Parents have many opportunities to visit the school and look at their children's work as well as talk to teachers about any concerns.
- A weekly toy library for parents with pre-school children is well attended and parents enjoy borrowing toys for their children to play with at home.
- The school has very good links with a wide range of business and charitable organisations, which enhance educational provision by having a direct impact on pupils' learning.
- The school benefits from its very good partnership with a local Nursery school attended by some children before they start in the Reception class.

Commentary

42. Almost the same number of parents attended the meeting prior to inspection as returned questionnaire responses (41 and 47 respectively). Whilst responses to the questionnaire are mostly positive, they appear more equivocal than those given at the meeting since they 'agree' with the questions posed rather than agreeing 'strongly'. Nevertheless, there is marked consensus that children are well behaved, are expected to work hard, make good progress and are well taught. Similarly, parents believe there are good arrangements for children settling into the Nursery. They like the good range of activities available across the age-range and think the school is well run and managed. Parents at the meeting expressed admiration for the acting headteacher. They are aware of the difficult circumstances the school experiences. They like the school and are pleased they chose it for their children. They appreciate how teachers, including the acting headteacher, make themselves available at the start and end of the school day.
43. Questionnaire responses mostly show satisfaction with the way children are helped by homework tasks but parents at the meeting agreed they would like homework improved because of inconsistency across classes. They also raised concerns about provision for swimming, wanting children to attend lessons before reaching Year 6. They were without doubt that their children are treated fairly, a unanimous view upheld by questionnaire responses. A significant minority of responses nonetheless showed concern about bullying and harassment. In discussion, and as already outlined, there was almost universal agreement that where bullying does occur it is dealt with promptly in line with known procedures. All parents see the school as welcoming and believe they are well informed about their children's progress and about school life. At the meeting, the view was put that sometimes school procedures are not altogether clear and the way they are handled appears rather too official and distant. Particular concern was expressed, for instance, in the matter of late dinner money. Also, parents were worried by safety issues linked to the absence of a school crossing outside the premises, although they saw that the school, too, has concerns about this. Parents agreed the school had "changed a lot" in recent years, and for the better. They listed a number of improvements, including the appearance of many classrooms, a safer and more stimulating playground, better facilities for information and communication technology and the quality of teaching which "goes from strength to strength", notwithstanding staffing problems.
44. Inspection findings uphold parents' positive views. They show parents are, indeed, well informed about school life. The school has acted promptly to make right the omissions pointed out in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents discussed during the inspection. Annual reports on pupils' progress vary and not all include targets set in English

and mathematics with suggestions about how parents can support learning in these. At times, the language used is not easy for parents to understand. The school makes every effort to translate important documents into the main community language (Bengali) and/or provide interpreters to explain matters to parents in their home language. Interpreters are routinely present at meetings. Where documents cannot be read, the use of home and community languages helps to ensure parents receive information orally. The school works energetically to encourage parents to come in, but for a number of reasons its success getting parents to help in classrooms is limited. Few attend the governors' 'surgeries' held each term but parent/teacher consultations are very well attended and appreciated.

45. Classes held in school for parents are also popular. During the inspection week, a session on parenting skills (one of a series) was very well attended and the school states there is similar enthusiasm for those on English language skills and information and communication technology. The co-ordinator for Ethnic Minority Achievement canvasses views on what parents would like to do and liaises with local organisations to arrange suitable programmes. The co-ordinator is also developing a programme whereby all parents are interviewed when their children start school other than at the normal time. This makes sure all relevant information regarding pupils' knowledge and understanding of languages other than English is recorded and parents' views about their children's learning are also known. An attractive room is set aside for parents to meet informally, or for those who need somewhere to wait until they are sure their child is settled into a Nursery session. Many like to bring pre-school children to the weekly play sessions, resourced with large-scale soft toys, or borrow toys from the toy library.
46. There are notably strong links with a local Nursery school attended by some children before they start in Reception and these serve the children and the school well. The school works effectively, too, with several University departments of initial teacher training when placements are sought for trainee teachers. Links with other institutions such as local primary schools and the local secondary school are not strong. Nevertheless, the school is an effective resource for, as well as drawing from, its local community. A variety of community organisations and business partnerships provide funding for parent classes, the yearly 'Arts Week' and Year 6 pupils' study visit to Suffolk, all enriching school life. Partnerships with some City of London firms are also successful, as noted. These partnerships are well established and business partners who come in to school each week at lunchtime explain the progress in pupils' reading or computer skills seen by them, over quite short periods of time. Their sense of having contributed to this gives them real pleasure.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance of the school is **good**. Leadership by the acting headteacher is **very good**. Leadership by other key staff is **satisfactory** overall with some strong features. Management is **good**. Staff turbulence and recruitment difficulties, together with other unexpected problems linked to leadership and management, have presented additional challenges. The school has faced up to these admirably.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher's inspiring leadership has won the confidence of the governing body and staff, who share his strong commitment to raising standards.
- Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They help shape its vision and direction.
- The role of teachers with responsibilities for co-ordinating aspects of the school's work is underdeveloped.
- The acting deputy head gives strong support to the acting headteacher. In partnership with other senior managers, she effectively motivates staff and pupils.
- The acting head and his senior managers are very good role models (as practitioners) for staff, and, more generally, for pupils.

- Senior managers have an excellent commitment to equality of opportunity. They 'set the tone' for the whole school.
- Management systems for the efficient and effective identification and tracking of pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory.
- Financial management is very good. The senior administrative officer makes an important contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Commentary

47. The leadership and management of the school became complex and uncertain when the recently appointed substantive headteacher went on long-term sick leave. In the interim, the acting headteacher has returned from his own secondment to a neighbouring school to take up the role he held in the school before the permanent postholder was appointed last September. Through this latter experience, and through his work as deputy head for a considerable period before that, he knows the school and its community really well. He is clear about what needs to be done to keep it running smoothly during a difficult period, keeping a sharp focus on raising standards. Priorities set are sensible. For example, they have ensured the maintenance of high expectations of pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour. The acting headteacher's leadership is very good. His energy, enthusiasm and charisma have combined to inspire governors and the school community to support him in maintaining the positive ethos for learning and calm day-to-day running of the school, which are its hallmarks. He receives substantial support from the acting deputy head and the senior administrative officer. They make a formidable team. The acting deputy head played a very significant role in keeping the school on track during the autumn term until the acting headteacher could return. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all members of its community, adult and pupil, is excellent.
48. The governing body knows the school well. It has a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors bring good expertise to their work. They talk enthusiastically about what they do and of their commitment to the school. Since the previous inspection, a full complement of parent governors has been recruited. The chair of governors has kept a strong working partnership with the acting headteacher and supports senior managers to good effect. Governors fulfil their responsibility as critical friends. They hold the school accountable for standards reached. In addition to what they do in formal meetings, they have a good knowledge of the school's day-to-day life through a structured programme of visits to classrooms. They also make informal visits to school events and hold 'surgeries' regularly to canvass parents' views. Indeed, in her capacity as a business partner, one governor admits she thoroughly enjoys coming in to school to support pupils' reading.
49. Senior managers give the acting headteacher very good support by skilfully managing their own areas of responsibility. They show high levels of commitment to raising standards and further improving the quality of school life. They contribute effectively to a growing team spirit amongst staff at all levels. They are also very good role models for colleagues and for pupils, in the way they fulfil their own classroom responsibilities. However, while senior managers have a good grasp of their areas (including English and mathematics) through a number of monitoring activities, others with management responsibilities do not undertake the full range of these activities, reducing their knowledge and understanding of important parts of their work. They do not observe classroom teaching and learning in lessons. This is especially true for non-core subjects such as art and design and history, where monitoring is not properly developed, as noted in the last inspection report. School improvement planning admits the need for further work here but the acting headteacher points out that financial difficulties, allied to a high turnover of staff and to other recent set-backs, have led to delays in implementing planned improvements. The need for these is nonetheless acknowledged.
50. The importance of providing for the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, is signalled by the fact that the co-ordinator for this work is a member of the senior management team. Crucial to her responsibilities is

developing the school's partnership with parents as prioritised in school improvement planning. The acting headteacher is fully aware of weaknesses in provision for special educational needs and has taken firm action in enabling a thorough assessment of existing practices to be made. Currently, a specialist teacher from the local education authority's Learning Support Service is undertaking a systematic review of special needs provision across the school.

51. Firm action has also been taken with staffing difficulties. Until the leadership and management situation is resolved, one class teaching post will necessarily be filled temporarily. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality teaching staff for the Nursery have also led to temporary measures until a permanent appointment is made. So, a teacher with long experience of the school and its parent community oversees the Nursery. The school accepts these measures are far from ideal, especially since, to date, a number of temporary staff appointments have been made in Year 4. Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows that, while temporary appointees face difficulties when taking on their responsibilities, the school functions remarkably well. Through a very good system organised by the local education authority, the acting headteacher, acting deputy head and chair of governors were ably helped to explore staffing options and make workable decisions. Monitoring and support systems ensure these decisions have worked out as expected. For example, the acting headteacher supports teaching and learning activities in Year 4 in some lessons, and the local education authority has placed additional expertise in the Nursery, in the form of a teacher seconded part-time each week to work alongside Nursery staff.
52. Staff development and training opportunities are good. Teaching and support staff, including those new to the school, receive school-based support and training geared to individuals' professional development needs. They also take advantage of training provided by the local education authority. The school actively promotes the training of teaching assistants wanting to embark on locally based programmes to help them to qualified teacher status. This is seen not only as beneficial to the school in terms of their enhanced professional knowledge and understanding but also as a vital means of recruiting and retaining staff with language skills and knowledge of local communities well matched to pupils' own experiences.
53. The school is well managed. The acting headteacher is realistic about how well the school is doing. He is knowledgeable about what needs to be done next if levels of achievement are to keep rising. The performance management of teaching staff is effectively linked to required improvements in pupil achievement. In an area where, as already noted, the recruitment of good quality teaching staff is a problem, the acting headteacher has very successfully attracted a number of teachers to join school and so ensure that pupils are taught well.
54. The financial management of the school is very good. It has operated with a deficit budget for a considerable number of years. This has been reduced from £120,000 to £15,000 through a prudent yet thoughtful prioritising of expenditure. Indeed, the acting headteacher's and senior administrative officer's most recent monitoring suggests the school will have a small carry forward' figure by the end of the financial year. Money has been well spent and its impact on pupils' achievement has been significant. For example, the recently opened computer suite is already affecting pupil motivation and achievement in information and communication technology positively. The specialist expertise of the governor overseeing finances is well directed at apportioning the budget appropriately in favour of areas picked out for development. Specific grants are used for their designated purpose. The school acknowledges it has benefited greatly from Private Finance Initiatives, allowing much needed improvements to Nursery accommodation and to the decorative state of most classrooms and public areas. Since pupil numbers have increased this year, the school looks forward to a healthier financial position and to further improving school life. Planning predicts further improvements to provision in information and communication technology, subject to financial considerations.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	855,030
Total expenditure	810,578
Expenditure per pupil	4,103

Balance from previous year	-53,546
Balance carried forward to the next	-14,892

55. The principle of best value in the application of challenge, comparison, consultation and competition is central to the school's management and use of resources. When consideration is given to the good quality of education provided, the rising standards, the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management, especially in light of challenging circumstances, the very good ethos for learning and attention to equality of opportunity for all, the school gives good value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Special educational needs provision within mainstream education

Provision for special educational needs has already been written about in line with guidance. What follows enlarges on weaknesses identified in provision, and the actions being taken by the school.

Provision is **satisfactory** overall with strengths seen in provision at classroom level.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and for 'tracking' their progress are unclear.
- Neither is it clear how parents are kept informed about their children's progress and involved in reviewing this and in setting new targets where necessary.
- Good resources are available to support pupils.
- There is no single overview of the various intervention programmes aimed at raising achievement in literacy and mathematics, or at helping pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.
- The school has set in motion an audit of provision in this aspect of its work and this is already yielding a clearer picture of what is in place and what needs to be done next.

Commentary

56. The specialist reviewing provision for special educational needs has produced a 'provision map' usefully setting out the range of provision in the school and showing all forms of additional help pupils receive. This map applies to all those pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need who are on the Code of Practice register of special need. It also applies to pupils on the Behaviour Improvement Programme (which the co-ordinator for special educational needs recently introduced) as well as those getting support through Springboard Maths and through the early, additional and further literacy programmes developing literacy skills. A significant number of pupils is involved in these literacy programmes, mostly bilingual learners. The learning need of these pupils is linked to their knowledge and understanding of English: they are seen as benefiting from extra support in ways helping them move on to the next level in reading. Until recently, and understandably, these pupils have not been entered on the Code of Practice register of special need because their work comes within the remit of the co-ordinator for Minority Ethnic Achievement, who tracks their progress to very good effect. However, this has meant that no one has had an overview of all aspects of specialist support provision. The roles and responsibilities of key personnel who teach the intervention programmes (including the line management) are unclear. It is also uncertain who has overview of the work of the Learning Mentor, who supports pupils with behavioural and/or emotional difficulties in lessons and through one-to-one mentoring.

57. The school has a good range of resources to support pupils with special educational needs. These, too, have been included on the 'provision map' to enable teachers to decide on the most appropriate support for pupils' needs.
58. The specialist is set to work closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs to establish systematic procedures for identifying and tracking pupils. Importantly, work will involve parents at an early stage, making sure they are kept informed of their children's progress through regular reviews.
59. Ways of bringing together all aspects of support into a coherent and manageable package are also to be established. This will ensure that all work linked to inclusion is under one umbrella of responsibility, as outlined in school improvement planning. The acting headteacher is kept closely informed of what is being done and will be involved with senior managers and governors in reaching final decisions. Through the audit, the school is gaining a clear understanding of what it does well in this aspect of its work and what needs doing to make provision better. It is in a good position to move forward.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, marking an improvement since the last inspection. As noted earlier, the school has installed a temporary teacher in the Nursery until a permanent postholder can be appointed. This action has proved effective. The recently appointed co-ordinator leads by her excellent practice in the Reception classroom. She has been in post for only a few weeks and has not yet had time to get to grips fully with responsibilities and exert her influence across classes. But she has an excellent grasp of Early Years' work as evident in her ideas for developing practices in the school. For example, formerly, very good induction procedures for pupils were built on information gained from home visits made before children start school. The information gave a secure start to teachers' own assessment and record-keeping practices. Plans are firmly in hand to reinstate these procedures as an important way to supplement good Early Years' records kept by the school. The very good additional support of teaching assistants with multilingual skills matched to children's home languages and volunteer parents is of special value in helping children make a confident transition from one language to another in the school setting. The children make real strides in establishing and developing important English language skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in this area of learning.
- Inclusion is paramount - all children are skilfully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Independent learning skills are promoted strongly, with children encouraged to choose activities in both Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' good behaviour and attitudes towards work and play.

Commentary

61. The very good teaching and learning seen consistently in both classrooms helps children of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, to make very good progress in confidence, playing together and behaving well. They increasingly show a joy in learning. By the end of the Reception year, most children are judged likely to reach average standards in personal, social and emotional development.
62. Children in the Nursery are interested in their environment and want to explore the possibilities provided both indoors and outside. Most select an activity of interest to themselves and concentrate on this for an appropriate time, rather than 'flitting' around the classroom. Considering many of the children have been in the Nursery for only a short period, they have settled well and the great majority are confident and happy. They have good relationships with the adults caring for them. They know the classroom routines well, using a self-registering system in the morning and washing their hands before dinner. They clear up and put away equipment and materials with a will, helped in this by the well-labelled containers provided. A mark of their still-developing skills and social awareness is the way most play independently, seemingly unaware of others. On only a few occasions were children seen playing co-operatively without an adult's support. On one occasion, two girls engaged in conversation in Sylheti in the home corner set out as a Baby Clinic. They were concerned about bottle-feeding a large soft toy. Their body language and tone of voice signalled close agreement about what had to be done. On another occasion, a boy made a long track from pieces of wood linked together, persevering for a considerable time. When another child came and broke the track

into pieces, a slight altercation arose before the first boy calmly set to work again repairing his track.

63. These good beginnings are built on extremely effectively in the Reception class. Children are very happy and settled and, through an excellent combination of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, they gain in confidence and in concentration. Rather than working individually, many engage co-operatively with peers in activities. For example, several children playing in the home corner busily made a special “birthday tea” for one of their friends. Another three jointly constructed a brick house for a pig. The great majority of pupils change into kit for physical education without help, but one or two are still unsure of whether they like doing this in public. The teacher is keen to ensure that children become as self-sufficient as possible and this strategy is working well. They follow instructions and tidy away equipment and materials quickly and carefully. They are helped in this by storage boxes labelled effectively to illustrate their contents, many in both English and Bengali.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff place a strong emphasis on developing language skills relevant to the activities pursued. This helps children to communicate more effectively.
- Children are helped very sensitively to verbalise their thoughts and listen carefully to staff and other class members.
- There are good opportunities for children to learn basic skills of writing and reading and to enjoy a number of books.
- In Reception, the range and condition of resources for supporting and stimulating children’s learning are very good but they are unsatisfactory in the Nursery.

Commentary

64. Overall, teaching is good and well linked to a strong whole-school drive to improve standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Staff in the Foundation Stage work successfully to lay secure foundations for future development. This is essential, as many children enter Nursery with poorly developed speech and language skills and there is a much higher than average number for whom English is an additional language. Children do well and make at least good progress. However, by the end of Reception, although some are likely to reach average standards in communication, language and literacy, at least half probably will not.
65. The emphasis given to language development contributes significantly to the good start that children make in this area of learning in the Nursery. A nursery nurse and teaching assistant with languages matched to the children’s, play an important role in helping children realise what is being done and what the general expectations are. Through translation, they build up the vocabulary of many for whom English is a second language, establishing vocabulary items in the home language that may not be familiar. Through play activities, pupils are introduced to initial letter shapes and are encouraged to look at and enjoy books both on their own or when being read to by an adult. When playing in the home corner, children happily explain what they are doing, and are keen to show the Chinese decorations and cards on display.
66. In Reception, a class activity at the beginning of the day focuses the children’s attention on how a story unfolds. Using the children’s love and knowledge of “The Three Little Pigs”, the teacher captivates their interest by pinning cut-out characters on the board as she retells the story. By skilful questioning, provoking enthusiastic answers, she establishes that the children recall the story and can order the events that take place. Many follow-up activities pick up on the content of this story so as to improve language skills still further. For example, there are felt models and finger puppets of the characters to use, so children can retell the story in their

own way. Children are helped to talk to each other in the home corner. They often do so in their first language, before reverting with little effort into English.

67. Emergent writing is encouraged and some children are becoming confident in forming letters correctly. They enjoy listening to stories and love looking at books. For many, the skill of reading is still at an early stage.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff promote mathematical vocabulary effectively through a wide range of activities.
- An excellent range of equipment and materials in Reception supports mathematical development to very good effect.
- Activities and displays in the Nursery are insufficiently stimulating with regard to mathematical development.

Commentary

68. Teaching and learning are good. This helps children achieve well, especially in the Reception class, where many activities are well aimed at promoting mathematical development. However, by the end of the Reception Year, only about half are judged likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area.
69. Many of the children in the Nursery have not been in school long and several of these are very young and immature. A few are beginning to count at a very simple level and, with the support of a teaching assistant, match groups of objects to number cards. One boy can match plastic numbers from zero to five to numbers on cards. The teacher tries to interest one or two in making and counting play-dough sausages, but children are not keen to say how many they have made. They prefer manipulating the dough. Number sequences are introduced appropriately through rhymes and stories. A visit to a farm is followed up, and children are encouraged to count how many eggs there are in a box they are shown.
70. The Reception class provides many excellent opportunities for children to do well in all aspects of the mathematics appropriate for them. Through work in sand and water trays, they learn how many times a small container has to be emptied to fill a larger one and they know the words “full” and “empty”. A large, simple balance allows children to weigh out plastic animals. Some can draw numbers correctly and match these to groups of objects. The use of well-known songs, rhymes and stories introduces them to early counting skills. Displays in the classroom further stimulate their interest in mathematics. In one school assembly, celebrating achievement, a child in this class was commended for a knowledge of numbers up to 20, but many more are at an early stage in their number acquisition.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The overall provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to learn from direct experience, such as through cooking and working on the computers.
- Good use is made of visits related to this area of learning.
- Excellent resources in the Reception class stimulate children’s curiosity.
- Some resources in the Nursery are well used and ‘sad’ looking.

Commentary

71. Teaching and learning are good. This helps many children build well on a poor initial knowledge and understanding of their world. By the end of the Reception year, it is judged that about half the children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
72. In the Nursery, children's knowledge and understanding of the world are promoted through a range of activities, such as those planned for in the role-play area organised as a Baby Clinic. Some good resources are provided for children to change nappies and use feeding bottles. Because many have met such things at home, these resources work well. A previous visit to a farm also proved a success, although adults report that some children were frightened by the sight of live chickens. The Nursery teacher follows up evident interest in this outing, bringing in photographs taken on the visit and talking about what the children saw and did. Children are interested. They recall events but find it hard to talk about them beyond using one or two-word sentences.
73. In Reception, children enjoy using the wide range of construction kits available. They are adept at putting together interlocking plastic kits as buildings and vehicles. They love using nails and a hammer to attach plastic shapes to chipboard, carefully avoiding hitting their own thumbs. They focus well when completing large floor jigsaws, and mould play-dough to the initial letter of their names. Several children are able to operate a class computer at a simple level. One girl produced a very careful and recognisable drawing of her Barbie doll and, with some teacher support, printed off a copy for the inspector to keep. Others are at the stage of drawing patterns with different colours and shapes. The well-managed deployment of a teaching assistant allowed groups of children to bake biscuits outside the classroom area. There is great delight with the results - especially as pink icing is going to be added when the biscuits cool down.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Overall, provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- There are many good opportunities for children to use simple tools and equipment.
- There is a secure outside play area attached to the Nursery giving children opportunities to play and develop physical skills such as climbing, sliding and scrambling over equipment.
- There are no wheeled vehicles such as tricycles for children to use.
- The Reception class is on the first floor of the building and has no direct access to the outside.
- Children in Reception have regular physical education lessons in the hall and have sessions outside in the playground beyond the enclosed Nursery space.

Commentary

74. Children in the Nursery have good opportunities to play and exercise outside in a secure environment. The Reception teacher ensures her class has many opportunities to use the main playground as well as take part in physical education lessons in the hall. Good teaching helps children achieve well and, by the end of Reception, a majority is expected to reach the early learning goals.
75. Children in the Nursery are beginning to handle equipment and simple tools carefully and sensibly. They persevere at using scissors to cut down the weeds in the outside flowerbed. The outside area is used well to promote physical development. Children gain in confidence as they balance and climb on the apparatus. However, the area is rather small for the number

of children using it. There are no wheeled vehicles and so children cannot learn skills such as how to steer around a space while showing awareness of others.

76. No physical education lessons in the hall or on the outside playground were observed in Reception. Planning shows they feature regularly as part of provision in this area. Discussion with the teacher also reveals that sessions are well planned and much enjoyed by the children. However, children do not use an outside area on an ongoing basis and this limits their choice of activities and venue. In the classroom, the children's use of simple tools and equipment is developing well. A wide range of activities includes the use of pencils, glue spreaders, paintbrushes and scissors. The children construct gaily decorated puppets from cardboard rolls. They carefully stick spaghetti strands and paper straws to paper to represent houses built by the "three little pigs", making sure that they do not use too much glue.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Children are encouraged to use a good range of media and explore pattern, shape and colour.
- There is good role-play, helping children use their imagination and develop language skills.
- In Reception, children are introduced to the work of artists and encouraged to produce their own work based on what they are shown.
- In the Nursery, insufficient use is made of the children's own work in displays around the classroom.
- Poor language acquisition, and a lack of familiarity with well-known nursery songs, prevents the youngest children from joining in singing with any great enthusiasm.

Commentary

77. Teaching is good, which helps children make good progress. In both classes, they enjoy playing in the role-play areas, gaining confidence in using different media and tools. A lack of previous experience of well-known rhymes and songs prevents children in the Nursery from taking a full part in singing activities. In Reception, they are building up a good knowledge of the work of famous artists.
78. From evidence of children's past work in the Nursery, it is clear that they have explored different materials and media. Patterns made with lentils, glitter and paint are well displayed and the children are keen to point out their own work. However, there are few other examples of children's current work stimulating their interest in this way. A paint table is set out and children mix colours and produce pictures and patterns, but this was not a popular activity. Children like listening to the teacher playing his guitar and enjoy playing untuned instruments themselves. They are starting to join in with well-known songs. The limited English of many and evident lack of experience leads many to find it hard to join in with enthusiasm. The Baby Clinic role-play area is used well, with some children showing imagination in how they use the nappies and bottles to care for their dolls.
79. In Reception, children experiment well with collage materials, cardboard tubes, boxes and glue. Much of their work is linked to a theme being studied in their language sessions and this helps to stimulate their interest in what they produce. They are being introduced to the work of other artists, such as Mondrian, and are learning to paint in particular styles. These activities are challenging but results show that the teacher's expectations are realistic. Folded, painted butterflies, demonstrating symmetry in design, are produced to support children's mathematical development. As noted above, role-play areas are used well. In this classroom, they are well resourced and help children play imaginatively and with increasing co-operation.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. Many pupils have English as an additional language and the school provides well for these pupils. Learning support assistants give a good range and level of support for pupils with special educational needs and those still developing English language skills.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities are taught well and their achievement is good.
- Good curriculum coverage and clear planning make sure that pupils have many opportunities to speak, listen, read and write.
- Effective teaching of basic skills means pupils spell and read well.
- Pupils' work is not always well presented and related inconsistencies in teachers' expectations are evident.
- Positive relationships and very good pupil attitudes result in lesson time being used well.
- Teachers' marking and feedback is inconsistent. It does not always tell pupils how they might improve.

Commentary

80. Inspection evidence shows standards in speaking and listening are average by Year 2 when pupils work with familiar adults. They are notably less confident in other contexts. Able pupils and those of average ability also reach average standards in reading and writing. Standards in writing, however, are adversely affected by carelessness with spelling and the frequently poor presentation of work. When pupils focus on these skills, achievement is much better (for example, when practising handwriting). By 11, pupils reach average standards overall. Those with proficient English language skills, including the many learning English as an additional language, can express their ideas articulately in subjects across the curriculum. They read a variety of texts with understanding and able pupils and those of average ability write at length. Writing shows understanding of the need to sequence ideas logically and choose words in ways helping to keep the reader's interest.
81. Boys and girls of all prior attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, do well given their starting points. Pupils make good progress in the subject, regardless of gender or ethnicity. The school provides well for pupils with learning needs, including the many with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
82. Curriculum coverage is good and teachers' careful planning, including explicit learning objectives shared with pupils, makes sure all pupils speak, listen, read and write each day. Pupils listen attentively. They have positive attitudes towards their learning in English. Pupils in all age groups are proficient at talking in pairs and reporting back to the rest of the class on points teachers want them to explore independently. Many have limited vocabularies, but teachers support and encourage them to use a correct vocabulary when describing or explaining their ideas.
83. There is a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills and pupils make good progress in learning how to spell, punctuate and use correct grammar. They make good progress in reading and, in lessons, teachers encourage pupils to predict, infer and deduce meaning from what they read. Most reach expected levels relative to their age, and some exceed this. Discussions with pupils show they understand the purpose and value of reading and are keen to improve their skills.
84. Teachers provide pupils with a good range of writing opportunities, including recounting events, making factual reports, writing poems and stories. Work is planned at levels expected in all year groups relative to pupils' ages, and teachers match tasks successfully to pupils' differing

abilities, showing good knowledge and understanding of these. Handwriting is taught formally in all year groups. Yet there is a marked difference between pupils' handwriting in their "handwriting books" and the style they use in their general English work and other subjects. So, work is not always well presented, and inconsistencies in handwriting and presentation are seen across the school. Some pupils have individual targets to improve these, but very few reminders or pointers as to what they should do were seen in teachers' marking comments.

85. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Some very good teaching was seen in Years 3, 5 and 6. In the best lessons, teachers' planning has explicit objectives shared with pupils in language they understand. Teachers explain a lesson's main points thoroughly and thoughtfully. They match work effectively to meet individual needs. Teachers work well with teaching assistants, who are an integral part of all aspects of lessons. Teachers ensure such staff are well briefed beforehand and are deployed to give the most effective support to pupils with special educational needs or those still developing their English language skills.
86. Pupils' positive attitudes toward their work and their very good behaviour help ensure that time is used well, and that no disruptions interfere with the flow of teaching and learning. As a consequence, pupils, especially those in Year 6, settle well to tasks, make very good progress and produce work of at least satisfactory quality during lessons.
87. Pupils' work is assessed regularly via extended writing and tests. Results are analysed and used to inform teachers' planning and target setting for individual pupils. Year 6 pupils currently benefit from small group teaching in 'booster' lessons for English, set according to ability. These are well aimed at consolidating previous learning and moving pupils on towards a higher level, in line with assessment information and targets set. As already noted, a good number of pupils across the age-range benefit from additional support in developing their literacy skills through structured programmes of work.
88. The subject is well led and managed by a co-ordinator with a clear idea about what needs to be done. She knows where strengths lie and improvements are needed. She has undertaken some classroom observations, though her efforts have been disrupted by staffing shortages. Other monitoring activities include scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' learning outcomes. All teaching staff are involved in assessing samples of work, to agree levels against National Curriculum criteria, and the co-ordinator plays a key role in leading such sessions.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

89. Pupils have good opportunities to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills as part of their work in other subjects. Effective cross-curricular links are made with other subjects such as science and history, where pupils are expected to discuss ideas with their 'talk partners' and to use skills learned in English to present their work in a clear and legible manner. Extended writing on a history theme showed Year 5 pupils had paid attention to sequencing ideas and grammatical points such as capital letters, full stops and paragraphs. Pupils are also helped to broaden their vocabulary through teachers insisting that subject-specific words be used and pupils form complete sentences to explain their ideas, where it is judged this is within a pupil's capability. For example, in a Year 6 music lesson, a teacher waited expectantly until a pupil used more than one or two words to explain what instrument he would play.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising.
- Pupils across Years 1 to 6 achieve well in mathematics.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly in place and teachers plan well using its guidance.
- Teaching is most frequently good or better and pupils make good gains in learning.
- Assessment information is used to very good effect so work is well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

90. In the latest statutory tests for 11-year-olds, the broadly average result compared to pupils in all schools hides the fact that almost all pupils achieved at the expected Level 4 or above. In fact, pupils did better than their peers at Level 4 and were on a par with them at Level 5. The overall average result is especially commendable given that significantly more pupils than usual in this cohort were identified as having special educational needs and some were still at a relatively early stage of learning English. Inspection evidence supports the good picture. It shows all current Year 6 pupils do, indeed, do well, given their capability, including those with special educational needs and those at a relatively early stage of learning English. At this point in the school year, standards are judged broadly average, with more able pupils and some of average ability set to do better than average. Booster classes, taken each week by Year 6, provide a very good means of focusing teaching on smaller groups set according to ability. In a lesson seen, pupils of average ability made very good gains in learning because all group members had to participate in ways helping them explain their thinking before moving on.
91. By Year 2, able pupils and some of average ability achieve as expected for their age. They sequence numbers to 100 and count in tens, backwards or forwards. They know how to calculate using addition and subtraction with two-digit numbers and are coming to understand multiplication. Work in exercise books shows they can solve written problems successfully and convert these to addition and subtraction 'sums' to find the answer. They generate their own number sentences (as when an able pupil writes "I put 5 in my head and counted to 12"), giving the correct answer for each sentence. Less able pupils manage at a simpler level (for example, with numbers below 10), getting good support when recording work. All pupils gain from a stress on practical work. This was illustrated clearly in a very good Year 1 lesson. In answer to a teacher's brisk opening question "Can you give me two numbers that make 10?", a boy chose 3 clothes pegs and then 7 more in a different colour to put on a clothes hanger. He counted the complete set confidently and the class joined in. A girl placed 7 pegs and then 3 on the hanger, showing a very good grasp of the reversibility of the boy's arrangement. The teacher praised this and recorded what the pupils had done to show $3 + 7 = 10$ and $7 + 3 = 10$, illustrating a lesson objective linked to mathematical symbols. Subsequently, pupils across the ability range showed sound knowledge and understanding of number operations for addition and subtraction to 10, explaining how they arrived at answers using mathematical vocabulary correctly. Many showed secure understanding of counting in twos and could explain subtraction in different ways (for example, "take away", "count back", "less than").
92. Teaching is usually good or better. In the Year 6 booster class, excellent teaching kept pupils on task and made demands on their thinking that revealed really good knowledge of individual abilities. Pace was brisk and expectations were very high about the amount of work to be covered. Often, pupils said "I know that..." when answering questions, revealing sound knowledge of relevant times tables linked to multiplication and division. A boy recognised his wrong answer to 431×23 was owed to multiplying 30 by 20 incorrectly and not taking account of place value. Such errors support emphasis placed on checking work, especially in light of the focus on taking tests. Teachers plan lessons well, matching work to pupils' abilities. Support staff makes sure pupils know what to do, as in a good Year 5 lesson when the Learning Mentor made sure a pupil could get on, while helping others with work on measuring

angles. In this lesson, a teacher's close attention to key vocabulary, linked to angles, meant that pupils could explain mathematical terms. It reinforced their understanding of angles greater or lesser than 90 degrees. Teachers commonly take such care. They are sensitive to bilingual learners' needs to expand their subject-specific vocabulary.

93. Very good use is made of a wide range of assessment information when grouping pupils. Very good attention is also paid to checking whether teaching and learning objectives have been met at the end of lessons. So, the Year 6 teacher checked with pupils what objectives had been met in learning to apply knowledge of multiplication and division to solving problems; areas for further work were identified. Teachers generally check progress, too, in the course of a lesson, intervening when they see a common problem. For example, in Year 5, a teacher reminded pupils about which scale they needed to use on the protractor. The marking of pupils' work is variable, though, ranging from helpful comments to show what has worked to ticks, showing work has been seen. Most teachers insist on neat presentation but Year 2 pupils' work is untidy. This not only detracts from its appearance but also at times leads to errors. Teachers place good emphasis on mathematics through stimulating displays linked to the subject in classrooms.
94. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who is also acting deputy head. Because of demands relating to leadership responsibilities, including a spell as acting headteacher for the autumn term, her monitoring activities have taken a back seat recently. Nevertheless, she has a clear view of provision, aided by the perspective gained through work connected to school leadership. She keeps up-to-date with subject developments and confidently leads staff In-service sessions (for example, on sampling pupils' work and agreeing levels against National Curriculum criteria). As co-ordinator for assessment and recording, she also has a very secure understanding of all assessment data and its use, with a keen awareness of how this is applied across classes. The school has continued to build to good effect on provision and standards noted in the previous inspection report.

Mathematics across the curriculum

95. Few instances of mathematics being applied to other subjects were seen during the inspection. However, relevant skills are used in science and when pupils work out co-ordinates on maps in geography. Year 3 pupils linked work on patterns with mathematical studies and, in Year 2, pupils used rulers to check the size of different elements of their designs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' investigative skills are being developed systematically.
- "Booster" classes in Year 6 are very effective in consolidating and extending pupils' learning.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy science, especially when involved in investigative and experimental tasks.
- Marking does not lead pupils to learn from their mistakes and make appropriate corrections.
- Poor linguistic skills, particularly when recording ideas and results, hamper higher levels of attainment across the ability range.
- Past work reveals an unsatisfactory match of methods used for recording work to levels of ability.
- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reached well below average standards compared to pupils in all schools in the 2003 teacher assessment and statutory test results.
- In practical, investigative lessons observed, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations for pupils' ages.

Commentary

96. Pupils start school with very low levels of scientific understanding. Due to the good opportunities they are offered, all build successfully on their learning and acquire an interest in the subject as they move through the school. They achieve well, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity. The school works hard to overcome factors affecting standards reached. It has for example recognised that some pupils have problems understanding test papers, rather than lacking scientific knowledge. Consequently, it is currently providing expert, focused tuition for Year 6 pupils through “booster” groups set according to ability. The very good teaching in these groups, with its relevance to national tests, is highly beneficial in its effect on learning. . By the end of Year 6 pupils are set to reach average standards overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils also reach standards expected for their age, particularly when engaged in practical work but this is not reflected in their workbooks. Here, worksheets proliferate and these are not always completed with sufficient care by pupils.
97. The good standard of teaching and learning seen at the last inspection has been maintained. Teachers have introduced more investigative and experimental opportunities into lessons, helping make the subject more stimulating and exciting. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection when an inconsistent use of such practical work was reported. Lessons are resourced well and teachers introduce scientific vocabulary to good effect. They have good knowledge and understanding of subject requirements. In very good lessons, such as one seen in Year 5, pupils set up their own experiments after making predictions and retested to check their results. Throughout the school, pupils really enjoy this type of practical activity, co-operating very amicably with a partner or within a group. They persevere well even when they encounter problems. For example, when building simple electrical circuits in Year 2, pupils were not put off when it turned out some batteries and bulbs were duds. Having identified the problem, they sensibly replaced these with ones that did work and completed the task. Pupils are less keen to record their findings and even those with average ability do not do justice in their writing to what they have been able to explain orally.
98. All pupils are able to take part in this practical work and, due to help from other class members and good support from teaching assistants, those with special educational needs or still-developing English language skills make good progress. Teachers assess individual pupils’ progress at the end of each unit of study, but the policy of setting targets to take pupils on to the next stage in their work is still under-developed. In Year 6, good use is made of assessment to decide groups for “booster” classes and to determine what is to be covered in these. There is evidence in past work that methods of recording are not always sufficiently well matched to abilities, and that pupils with identified learning needs sometimes struggle to complete what has proved easy for others. Generally, teachers’ comments in exercise books do not lead pupils to see where improvements can be made, but only to an understanding of whether work is successfully or unsuccessfully completed.
99. The co-ordinator leads by demonstrating good practice in his classroom. He has introduced a new scheme of work, which supports less confident teachers, and has carefully organised resources into useful topic boxes so that equipment is readily available for units being taught. Presently, the co-ordinator has no release time from classroom duties in which to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and build up a picture of where more help and advice is needed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The new computer suite is having a positive impact on pupil achievement, motivation and standards reached.
- Pupils across the age-range achieve well. They reach standards in line with those expected for their age by Year 2 and Year 6.
- A consultant teacher gives very good support so pupils make very good progress in acquiring relevant skills during lessons.
- However, when the roles and responsibilities of those leading a lesson are not clear, pupil progress is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

100. A new computer suite was finally opened in the week prior to inspection. Consequently, staff and pupils were still in the process of familiarising themselves with the new facility during the inspection week. Sensibly, the school engaged the services of a consultant teacher for information and communication technology to induct staff and pupils into the new suite. Because of time-tabling, no lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2.
101. The three lessons seen in Years 3, 4 and 6 were jointly planned and taught by the consultant teacher in partnership with each class teacher. This was highly successful in two lessons but in a third, roles and responsibilities were not clarified sufficiently well beforehand. This led to confusion as to who was taking responsibility for each part of the lesson and resulted in pupils losing interest and making unsatisfactory progress. However, elsewhere, teaching and learning were very good and pupils did well. Clear planning, along with good preparation by teachers and confident use of the technology, meant pupils in these lessons engaged fully with the content taught, contributed purposefully and made good progress in consolidating prior learning and acquiring new subject skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils used the mouse competently and manipulated text with confidence. Pupils in Year 6 manipulated digital photographs and text to very good effect in order to make a multi-media presentation about their school. They enjoyed the “fun” element stressed in one learning goal and were keen to do their best. A pleasing ‘buzz’ was evident as partners shared a computer and discussed what to do. In a Year 3 lesson, good links were made with mathematics and art and design as pupils learned how to produce repeat patterns in a square, using only two colours.
102. The consultant teacher has been employed while the co-ordinator is acting headteacher. The consultant has overseen the installation of the new suite and has prepared a written report that usefully identifies areas for further development. All aspects of information and communication technology, including control and modelling activities, are planned and taught during the course of the school year. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the many learning English as an additional language, do well. Work in the subject contributes effectively to pupils’ moral and social development, encouraging them to co-operate at computers, take turns and pool ideas. Pupils show a great deal of interest in their work and many say this is their favourite lesson.
103. The new computer suite is well equipped with terminals and a laptop and projector for the teacher. It does not yet have an interactive whiteboard but the infrastructure for installation is in place and included in the development plan for the subject. The computer suite is well time-tabled and used effectively to support learning in the subject.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements are found in planning since the last inspection and statutory requirements are now met.
 - The curriculum framework shows appropriate subject coverage, outlining what needs to be taught in each year group over a school year.
 - Visits out of school give very good support to classroom work.
 - A new co-ordinator sees how the subject can be supported and developed to give it a higher profile and improve provision further.
 - Standards are below those expected nationally, relative to pupils' ages. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress.
104. Because of time-tabling, no lessons were seen and there is little geographical work in pupils' books. This has happened because the subject is organised to alternate with history for half-term periods, and because of the way practical activities are emphasised. Planning documents show appropriate coverage over the year throughout the school, in line with recommendations from the latest guidance.
105. In discussion, Year 6 pupils demonstrate knowledge of and some understanding about rainfall and the water cycle. They know quite a lot about rivers such as the Severn and the Thames, having looked at their locations on maps and contrasted them in terms of important differences. They use related words such as "source", "tributary" and "mouth" and can explain these terms. They also explain how silt is deposited in a part of the Thames closest to the school because of the strong currents when the tide comes up the river and recedes. Such understanding is not seen in recorded work. Pupils start school with a poor understanding of the world beyond their families and immediate environs. The school works hard to make up for this deficit. One of the strengths of the subject is its programme of visits to local areas, such as Shadwell Basin at Wapping, undertaken by Year 6 and linked to the work on rivers outlined above. These older pupils undertake a residential study visit to Suffolk, part of which compares and contrasts this quite different environment to their own city life. Younger pupils make journeys into the immediate locality and study their school in relation to its surroundings. For example, Year 3 pupils have drawn and painted pictures showing a 'bird's eye' view of local areas, showing how the streets radiate from the roundabout that is a prominent feature. Such experiences enhance the geography curriculum and bring aspects of their studies to life in ways pupils can relate to and understand. In addition to these good links with art and design seen in Year 3, links are also made with history, as when Year 5 pupils study maps of Ancient Greece and compare locations and place names with modern maps.
106. In spite of the focus given to geography for alternating half-term periods, the allocation of time is constrained because of the school's understandable anxiety about raising standards in core subjects. This impacts on the depth of work covered in geography and accounts, in part, for the lack of recorded work. However, themes such as "Where in the World is Barnaby Bear?" for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and "What's in the News?" for older pupils keep pupils' interest alive when geography is not the main focus on the timetable. Newspaper items from around the world - basis for a homework task for Year 6 pupils - are displayed, together with explanations for the pupils' choices. It is clear from discussion that they enjoy this work.
107. A new co-ordinator for the subject has not yet had an opportunity to monitor and evaluate what is being done across the age-range. She is enthusiastic and has many good ideas about how its profile can be raised, including links with literacy and the acquisition of a resource pack to support teachers' planning.

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- Visits to museums and historical buildings linked to the periods studied are routinely built into planning to support learning and stimulate pupils' imaginations.
- Eleven-year-olds reach standards broadly expected for their ages when they talk about what they do. Their written work, however, does not reflect this.
- In some year groups, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write about what they know and understand in their own words. Worksheets are overused in some classes.

Commentary

108. In a Year 2 lesson on the Fire of London, pupils revealed standards in line with those expected at this age when talking about the work they have done. They remembered when the fire started. They knew 1666 was a very long time ago and, with a teacher's help, worked out the intervening period was more than 300 years. They explained differences between the way people lived then and now (for example, in materials used to build houses). They made pertinent observations about such differences when they studied a large picture of a street in London before the fire. They noticed its narrowness; that it was covered with stones (they did not know the word "cobble", which a teacher supplied), and how closely packed the houses were. They knew these had wooden frames and agreed with the teacher that they would burn more quickly than stone houses. While the teacher demonstrated how wood burns easily and pupils watched with interest as a small piece caught light from a flame and was then doused in cold water, it was rather uncertain they grasped the significance of the teaching point. Still, they made sensible guesses in answer to questions about this and the picture (such as the function of a long 'spike' a man was holding). Their efforts showed a reasonable grasp of what they have learned as well as a desire to please the teacher by getting the 'right' answer.
109. Year 6 can recall each history topic they have covered as they moved through the year groups. For example, they learned about Ancient Greece in Year 5 when they made a visit to the British Museum to look at pottery of that period. The visit enthused them because they made "slab" and "pinch pots" back in school, decorated like the ones they saw. They enjoyed hearing and reading Greek Myths, too. Most recently, they have visited the Ragged School Museum while learning about children's lives in Victorian times. They enjoyed re-enacting being school children in a Victorian classroom. They explain that history helps us remember how "our forefathers lived" and how ways of life and ideas change over time. They cite researching through photographs and paintings, videos, the internet and books. They know older people are also a useful source of information because they can recall what has changed in their lifetimes. Pupils talked about an exciting time they had last term at Shadwell Basin, quite near to the school. Here, an archaeologist from the London Museum joined them and helped them find objects in the mud of the Thames, washed up as the tide flowed in and out. They had found pieces of mediaeval floor tiles and jug handles, bits of blue and white crockery from the 19th century, old bricks and a lot of old clay drain pipes. They explained how the archaeologist helped them identify and date the pieces, telling them about differences in colour and thickness of clay. They could set the periods they talked about in a time line.
110. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. In Year 1, a teacher used an interesting range of old and new objects for pupils to talk about, including one or two from Bangladesh and India commonly found in kitchens there years ago. Pupils enjoyed the class discussion and made good guesses about many objects, as when a boy said a chamber pot could be a large bowl for fruit. They were very amused when the teacher explained its purpose and how people would not have had indoor toilets many years ago. Pupils have a basic understanding of a 'long time ago' and 'now' and that people lived differently 'then.' They especially enjoyed looking at objects set out on tables, picking them up to talk about. However, the task of drawing an object and writing a simple sentence hindered such exploration and it was clear that pupils became anxious about getting the task done. This is a pity, since most are still developing English language skills and gain from practical activities that support their learning through focused talk, expanding their English vocabulary. Written work in Year 5 on the

Ancient Greeks shows pupils have a good capacity for writing about history with understanding, and that a teacher's high expectations help pupils present their work carefully. At times, though, it is evident that English writing skills are not yet secure. In Year 6, quite a number of pupils struggle with concepts they find difficult to express through written English, although the brief pieces they have done show a grasp of main points. Talking with pupils reveals their understanding is much better than their writing suggests.

111. The co-ordinator has only just taken over the subject but sees clearly the responsibilities involved. Planning follows the latest guidance and is supported well by a published scheme and teachers' resource pack. It builds in visits and opportunities for role-play to very good effect. Good links are made across subjects, as when Year 3 made a visit to the Tower of London connected to science work and Year 6 went to Shadwell Basin linked to geography studies. In a display of work by Year 5, good links are made to literacy through studying Greek myths and writing from the point of view of being a child at that time. Interesting classroom displays generally reveal a variety of resources is used to help pupils learn how to research and ask questions about the past. For example, teachers borrow artefacts from a local education authority loan service to promote learning from primary sources. Sometimes, though, there is an overuse of worksheets for recording work, especially for younger pupils. Time for history is constrained by other priorities. As mentioned, it alternates with geography for half-term periods.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

- Teachers take good account of pupils' personal experience in exploring different faith traditions and the religious practices linked to these.
- The school's emphasis on moral principles supports teaching and learning to very good effect.
- The co-ordinator has very good subject expertise.
- Development in the subject is hampered by delays in the updating of the locally agreed syllabus.

Commentary

112. Because of time-tabling, only lessons in Years 3 and 6 were seen. A scrutiny of work and displays in classrooms show that the subject is taught consistently across Years 1 to 6 in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In fact, standards reached in Year 6 are as expected by the locally agreed syllabus, while a scrutiny of work in Year 2 suggests these pupils, too, reach average standards in relation to the content taught. However, the work of these pupils, is untidy. They appear to find it hard to apply literacy skills (such as spelling and handwriting) to what they do. Nevertheless, looking at a single case, whilst a less able pupil struggled to write, she managed quite a sustained piece about the qualities an ideal friend would have. She had grasped the content of what was being taught as well as her generally more able peers.
113. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good. Year 3 pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of "God's ten laws", gained through role-play that stimulated thinking about the work being done. Groups had previously negotiated how they would illustrate the law they were given through this role-play. During the lesson seen, pupils watched each group attentively and were quick to identify, for example, "do not worship idols" and "respect your elders." A teacher's focused questioning provoked a lot of responses, helping not only to maintain pupils' interest but also expanding their answers and relevant vocabulary. They discussed Sunday as a day of worship for Christians and what this meant in practice, and how and why respect is shown for elders. A teaching assistant was active in all parts of the lesson and made sure pupils she supported understood and could contribute fully. The very good partnership between adults added notably to the quality of learning. At the same time, they were role models in audience participation, sharing their interest and pleasure in

performances, especially when they saw the good efforts of less able pupils. Good partnerships were also seen in Year 6 when the Learning Mentor and a teaching assistant supported the class teacher. Here, pupils were interested in learning about Christian beliefs and the festivals associated with these. A pupil said he thought Christmas was the most important festival for Christians, not Easter, which led to a good discussion about the possible reasons for this. A girl said she thought Easter would be more important because Christians believe Jesus was reincarnated at that time. She could explain this meant he died and rose again and the teacher supplied the word “resurrected” in the course of discussion. This in turn led to a consideration of Judaism and differences between faiths. A teacher’s skilled questioning served well to reinforce previous learning and extend this. In both lessons, a good pace was maintained with a sharp focus on teaching and learning objectives.

114. Displays of work are frequently attractive, serving to show not only work done, but how a range of resources (including artefacts from different faiths) is used to stimulate learning. Themes may also be illustrated by the kinds of questions pupils look at. In a display in Year 4, they thought about “What guides your life?” considering their faith, family, teachers and friends. Pupils’ work in lessons and on display is informed to very good purpose by the faith experiences of the majority. So, pupils familiar with the ideas and practices of Islam can link what they already know to new material through good opportunities teachers provide. Questions in lessons reveal pupils’ genuine interest in matters of faith and in moral dilemmas. Across classes, pupils’ written work most often places good emphasis on the transfer of literacy skills, such as handwriting and spelling, so that their work is pleasing in appearance. Unfortunately, sometimes too little attention is paid to these things, as noted above.
115. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has specialist subject knowledge. She realises teachers need to develop more confidence in teaching about the major world faiths to complement the good practice evident in teaching about personal relationships and putting across moral principles engaged when individuals make choices about their actions. Although teachers find the current, locally agreed syllabus quite demanding to use, the school has chosen to keep it, to ensure statutory requirements are properly met. It looks forward to a new syllabus that will give teachers more practical help in planning themes of work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes the subject well through exploiting the good accessibility of local art galleries and the talents of visiting artists who contribute to special events.
 - There is a good range of resources to support learning, including materials, posters and books.
 - The scheme of work based on national guidelines does not fully meet school needs.
 - Good quality work is produced in some classes, linking well to other subjects.
 - Sketchbooks are used inconsistently and sometimes inappropriately.
 - Time allocated to art and design is limited.
 - The co-ordinator has specialist knowledge and skills, and her own classroom practices are exemplars for others.
116. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with national expectations relative to pupils’ ages. They are particularly good in Years 3 and 5 where teachers have a special interest in the subject and through this are able to inspire very good learning. Generally, however, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress in acquiring relevant practical skills and knowledge of a variety of well-known artists. As this is a

practical subject, pupils with special educational needs and those still at a relatively early stage of English language acquisition learn well and make progress in line with their peers.

117. Evidence from work in lessons and displays throughout the school shows that pupils are gaining skills in handling many tools, colour mixing, using different media such as pastels and paint and drawing from observation. There are especially good links made to work in other subjects. As part of their work in science on their bodies, Year 1 pupils have drawn amusing self-portraits and compared their work to that of famous artists, such as Van Gogh. In Year 3, colourful paintings of buildings around the school helped reinforce as well as enrich pupils' historical and geographical studies of the local area. Notebooks written after a visit to the Tower of London have attractive embossed copper-leaf covers because these pupils took part in a workshop on how to make these at the Tower, linking work in science on the property of materials to art and design. Year 5 pupils carefully observe, and faithfully paint, the colours of autumn leaves. As well as producing still-life pictures in delicate pastels, they acquire a knowledge and understanding of how Cezanne and other painters tackled such subjects. Displays in classrooms and in public areas do much to make the school an attractive and stimulating place in which to work.
118. In almost all classes, the subject alternates on a half-termly basis with design and technology. Whether it is planned in this way or as a weekly lesson, the limited time allocated to the subject militates against pupils having sufficient opportunities to explore their ideas and develop important skills to a greater depth. The school recognises this and organises art events where pupils have an extended time to carry out a project from beginning to end, with adult expertise stimulating and overseeing work. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that pupils have few, if any, opportunities to develop their learning further by applying skills purposefully to a range of activities. Teachers are at times supported by visiting artists, and the calibre of work produced on these occasions is particularly good. The proximity of, and easy access to, well-known art galleries and museums in the area further enhance provision. A good range of resources supports both practical work and the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of different artists' work. In Year 3, a very good display of artefacts and designs from different cultural traditions links in well with the pupils' mathematical work on repeated patterns.
119. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and uses staff In-service time well to develop colleagues' subject confidence. She introduced the use of sketchbooks, explaining and demonstrating their purpose. In some classes, though, it is evident sketchbooks are used inappropriately and make little contribution to pupils' learning. Planning follows the latest guidance and is proving difficult for less confident teachers to implement. So, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are seen in work on display. The co-ordinator has many good ideas for the development of the subject. These include the production of a scheme of work encompassing the skills and techniques pupils need to acquire in ways teachers can more readily understand and implement. In recent years, the school's main drive has been to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Due to her high involvement in these initiatives, the co-ordinator has had little time in which to monitor and evaluate what is happening across the school in the art curriculum.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of a published scheme of work to support their planning.
- The co-ordinator knows what work is done throughout the school but does not have opportunities to observe teaching and learning in classrooms at first hand.
- Pupils enjoy their work and take pride in finished results.

- Because of the good support they receive, pupils with identified learning needs can succeed at tasks in line with their peers.
120. Lessons were observed in Years 2, 5 and 6. Work in these and evidence of pupils' past work indicates that standards in design and technology are in line with those expected nationally, relative to pupils' ages. Year 5 pupils used scissors correctly and confidently. They applied design principles and followed instructions well to make a variety of handles for carrier bags. They worked conscientiously, individually and in pairs, on handles that would make carrying a bag of shopping easier. They listened attentively to adults, concentrated on tasks and used tools and materials carefully to produce bags and handles that matched up to their intentions. In Year 2, pupils also concentrated well on producing their first attempts at a magnet intended for a refrigerator. They showed a real understanding of how this was to be achieved after watching a teacher's demonstration. They drew and cut round the different layers of the design and glued each layer in place carefully. Most tried hard to follow the design they had drawn in the previous lesson, making sensible adjustments to this as they worked. Almost all succeeded in producing pleasing results, albeit on a remarkably small scale.
121. Teaching was satisfactory in two of the lessons seen and good in a third. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and lessons are planned and prepared well. Resources are used effectively and lessons are well paced with no time wasted. Pupils' attitudes are positive and behaviour is very good. They enjoy what they do and are keen to succeed. Learning support assistants provide effective assistance for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English, making sure they understand work in hand.
122. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by a well-organised co-ordinator. She does not, though, have knowledge of teaching and learning in classrooms because monitoring time for such work is not yet available. The school uses a published scheme of work for design and technology that supports planning to good effect. Resources are sufficient to meet curricular demands and to enable work to be planned and taught at an appropriate level.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching aids pupils' learning markedly.
- Partnerships between class teachers and the specialist teacher are of very good and even excellent quality in some lessons.
- Time allocated for lessons is not consistent across classes, although a weekly 'singing assembly' redresses the imbalance to some extent.
- Older pupils benefit from participating in a music festival during the summer term that extends their musical experience in stimulating ways and makes very good links with dance and drama.
- The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed to promoting music but does not have a clear picture of teaching and learning across the school.
- Care has been taken to make sure all classes have access to a range of resources to meet curricular demands but many are obviously rather over-used.

Commentary

123. Because of time-tabling, lessons were seen only in Years 2 and 6. Year 6 pupils reach average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as when developing their first ideas for a group composition. Year 2 pupils also reach average standards in their subject knowledge and understanding when listening to music by a famous

composer, but their skills in playing instruments are underdeveloped and below those expected at this age.

124. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils can name many instruments in a piece they listen to on a tape recorder. They name the xylophone, piano, violin and clarinet and demonstrate knowledge of how to play these as they mime in time to the music. The specialist teacher monitors pupils' involvement keenly. For example, she agrees with a boy that the flute is played differently to the clarinet. She points out a flute cannot be heard in the taped music. This difference is reinforced well when the class teacher shows an illustration of a clarinet. Pupils are excited by instruments brought out for them, to begin work on their class composition (linked to the theme of 'fossils'). They all want to play but most find it hard to listen to the specialist's instruction that they need to choose an instrument to match the theme. It soon becomes clear they are uncertain about what to do because they are not sufficiently used to handling instruments. For example, when the specialist asks pupils to try out the sound before making a choice, almost all pupils only shake, bang or rattle their instrument once, tentatively, before quickly sitting down. Later, inexperience also shows in the way instruments are banged inappropriately. While this distracts the class teacher, the specialist helps pupils modulate the sounds they make and experiment with trying out a wider range, keeping the key teaching and learning objectives firmly in view.
125. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, the specialist led pupils on from listening to and discussing taped music to experimenting with vocal sounds and selecting instruments for group compositions. A true cacophony of sound subsequently grew as the specialist increased demands at intervals for pupils to add another layer of sound to their compositions. These entailed each group negotiating the pattern of instrumental sound to complement the 'rap' being spoken by one of their number. In spite of the surrounding noise, pupils listened intently to their group's effort, making changes to the order of playing, the dynamics or rhythm in suitable ways. One group got very good help to stay on task from a teaching assistant. Others benefited from the consistent monitoring of their efforts by the specialist and class teachers. When the specialist intervened near the end of the lesson to gain silence, she appeared hesitant in deciding whether or not they were ready to move forward, unable quite to make up her mind. But would they like to hear the next step to be taken? A universal "Yes!" made evident pupils' eagerness to work on the next challenge. By the end of the lesson, it was very apparent they had made really good progress in achieving the teaching and learning objectives set out at the start. The recordings of their first efforts showed a very good base for developing ideas in future lessons.
126. In a 'singing assembly' for all classes, singing is good. Pupils sing in tune and keep in time to the piano. They improve in line with teaching points made by the specialist teacher who leads the session. They understand terms such as pitch and dynamics, when the teacher demonstrates how these can be improved. The acting headteacher supports the session well. He leads the singing, showing enthusiasm for the subject and about what is being aimed for. He is keen to promote music and the arts by, for example, the school's support for and participation in local events. In the summer term, Year 6 pupils will again take part in the Spitalfields Music Festival, through the school's funding of additional specialist input through workshops prior to the event, focusing on drama and dance as well as singing and instrumental work. In previous years, Year 5 pupils have also been involved. This year, the focus is on the oldest pupils.
127. The co-ordinator is a part-time member of staff. He is knowledgeable and committed to the subject but does not have an overview of teaching and learning in the school. He is not aware, for instance, that time for music across classes is shared out inconsistently or that some teachers' lack of confidence leads to pupils having insufficient opportunities to practise important skills. A scheme of work is in place to support class teachers when the music specialist is not available, but evidence suggests that in some instances her weekly lesson is taken as meeting pupils' needs by itself. The co-ordinator has conducted a thorough audit of resources and got rid of quite a lot as not being fit for further use. Some new instruments have

been bought but, while this is sufficient to meet curriculum demands, it is recognised that matters could be further improved.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the last inspection and all curriculum requirements, including swimming for pupils in Year 6, are met.
 - As acting headteacher, the co-ordinator uses his very good subject expertise to support teaching and learning in lessons.
 - Although outdoor space is limited, the school uses this and its indoor facilities to good effect.
 - Pupils enjoy lessons. They like to demonstrate movement sequences to the class and work at improving these.
 - Good attention is paid to safety matters, although teachers do not always make the reasons for these sufficiently clear to pupils.
128. Because of time-tabling, lessons in Year 1 and Year 4 classes only were observed. Consequently, an overall judgement on standards is not made. Time-tables show all pupils have a physical education lesson each school week. Planning documents also show the subject is covered in line with the latest guidance, including swimming for Year 6. This is an advance since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, parents express a wish for children to attend swimming lessons from a younger age and pupils themselves are lobbying for such a move through the School Council. Time allocated to lessons is, however, already constrained by other priorities, and the school knows this issue is problematic.
129. Teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good in another. In the latter, good partnership work between the newly appointed, temporary Year 4 teacher and acting headteacher was to the fore. Pupils also benefited from the acting headteacher's subject expertise. They made good progress in gymnastic skills in jumping, balancing and movement. By the end of the lesson, standards of work and performance had risen notably and were in line with those expected, relative to pupils' age. Pupil behaviour is generally good and they enjoy activities. In Year 1, pupils thoroughly enjoyed performing a variety of movements on mats, climbing on to and off high stools and balancing on benches. Many showed good body control and were also adventurous in what they attempted on the mats. Quite a number could perform good cartwheel movements. One boy did several for sheer joy. Pupils did not, though, understand safety matters and the need to take care when, for instance, performing a forward roll. The class teacher and a support teacher monitored pupils effectively and stopped such movements but missed opportunities to explain why.
130. The co-ordinator is the acting headteacher and his role in leading and managing the subject is currently in abeyance. Nevertheless, it is evident he brings very good subject knowledge and understanding to this part of the school's work. Resources are satisfactory in meeting curricular demands and are checked regularly with regard to health and safety. As noted earlier, the limited outdoor space impacts on the development of pupils' games and athletics skills. But this is outside the school's control. In the circumstances, the school makes good use of available space, including a large hall indoors.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for pupils' personal and social education permeates the school's work.

- Relevant policies are securely in place and adults at all levels are consistent in the way they interact with pupils, showing shared values in this regard.
- The School Council is an excellent forum for pupils from Years 1 to 6. Their views are made known in ways reinforcing their ideas of citizenship.
- Programmes linked to sex and relationships education are not fully in place because the school is sensitive to parents' views and is seeking related advice.
- There is inconsistency across classes in the labelling of lessons designated for personal, social and health education, suggesting the school's policy on these things is unclear.

Commentary

131. Strengths allied to this aspect of the school's provision are already dealt with. No personal, social and health education lessons were seen because of time-tabling. However, each class has a weekly lesson, planned either in line with a structured programme or to meet pupils' needs in relation to their own concerns. The programme deals with such themes as 'people who help us' and 'respect for property'. Teachers reorganise planned sessions in light of pupils' known concerns when necessary (for example, if someone complains about bullying at playtime and wants the matter taken up at class level). Sessions for personal, social and health education are variously labelled, which is confusing. They are designated 'circle time' in Years 1 and 2 and some other classes, but also as 'golden time' or - straightforwardly - as personal, social and health education lessons.
132. 'How to keep healthy', an awareness of 'the misuse of drugs' and some aspects of sex education are tackled well within the science curriculum. A wider sex and relationships education programme for the oldest pupils has still to be agreed by the governors but is presently under discussion, in consultation with the local education authority. Here, parents' reservations about its content are being taken into account.
133. Assembly themes serve well to explore moral and social issues and to extend pupils' knowledge of the wider world. This was seen to good effect during the inspection through the theme "Investing in the future" (outlined above). Religious education lessons also link very well to personal and social development. For example, when exploring their understanding of 'good' and 'evil', Year 6 pupils discussed the impact of "your conscience" on making decisions when faced with moral choices. They showed good understanding of an 'inner voice' prompting ideas, which they then might give in to or resist. They could link such prompting to bullying someone at school or being tempted to steal from a shop because they want something but do not have enough money. Year 3 pupils realise the need for love and kindness in personal relationships and the gains to be made by sharing with others when talking about making personal choices. They explain why it is important not to lie or hurt others and to listen to what others say.
134. More informally, conversations with pupils in classrooms and around the school show they have well-developed ideas about taking responsibility for their actions and helping other people. This is well illustrated at School Council meetings where delegates from Years 1 to 6 each contribute to discussions and are prepared to take further action. They willingly join 'working parties' to explore ideas and share them with peers. For example, Year 6 pupils agreed to visit some classes to explain what is involved in a school sports day and to canvass opinions about holding one, because some delegates said their peers did not understand about this.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

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

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

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).