

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS FAIRCHILD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100243

Headteacher: Mr Alasdair Friend

Lead inspector: Mr Barney Payne

Dates of inspection: 10 - 13 November 2003

Inspection number: 260495

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	296
School address:	Napier Grove London
Postcode:	N1 7HX
Telephone number:	020 7253 9469
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Churchill-Coleman
Date of previous inspection:	27 September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a bigger than average inner city school with 25 children (full-time equivalent) in the nursery and 271 in Reception and Years 1 to 6. The school has a 16 place designated unit, the Language Resource Base, that provides for pupils with speech and communication difficulties. The percentage of free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English (64 per cent) is very high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and those with Statements of Special Educational Needs is well above average (38%). The school serves a community in a very deprived area. There is considerable pupil mobility. The pupils include 20 refugees and asylum seekers. Attainment on entry to the school is very low. There has been significant staff turnover but the school is fully staffed. As a community school, Thomas Fairchild has a commitment to developing as a centre for the local community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector	
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24027	Bharathi Kutty	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school that provides a good standard of education. Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher has **very good** clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations. The curriculum is **good**. Teaching is **good**. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well and have good attitudes and behaviour
- Teaching and learning are good
- The school provides a good breadth of curricular opportunities, with very good opportunities for enrichment and accommodation and resources are good
- Pupils are well cared for
- Links with parents are good and links with the community are very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and for those attached to the Language Resource Base it is very good
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good
- Standards are low compared to national standards
- The rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average
- Governors need more rigorous systems to inform themselves about the work of the school

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection

Improvement since the last inspection is **good**. Although standards are lower at age 11 in the core subjects, pupils face a variety of challenges and do make good progress and achieve well. Pupils make better progress than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching has improved. Behaviour is better. Although attendance is lower, the school's strategies to improve attendance have improved. The curriculum has improved. Links with the local community were good before but are now very good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the Language Resource Base, has improved, as has the provision for pupils with English as an additional language. The school provides better value for money. The school has responded well to the key issues identified in the last inspection, but still needs to target areas of weakness in core subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E*	D
Mathematics	E	E	E*	D
Science	E	E*	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average;

E - well below average; E - very low*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievement is good, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In 2003, a significant number of eleven-year-olds had joined or left the school between Years 3 and 6 and this had a negative impact on standards, in combination with other factors. Those who were at the school all the time achieved levels that would have been expected given their attainment at age seven. Many pupils join the school at an early stage of English language acquisition, which makes it more difficult for the school to reach the levels expected, as does the number of pupils with special educational needs. Children's attainment when they enter the school is well below average. By the end of Reception, despite

good progress, children's attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is still well below average overall. At age seven pupils' attainment in the 2003 tests was well below average compared with all schools nationally but compared to similar schools reading was average and writing and mathematics above average. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils reach the national standard at age seven but are below average at age 11. In other subjects pupils reach the national standard. In music their achievement is very high and standards are above average. Standards have improved in ICT, and are significantly higher in music, since the last inspection.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is **good**, reflected in positive attitudes and good behaviour. **Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Their cultural development is very well provided for. **Attendance is unsatisfactory**, although pupils are mostly punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Strengths include many aspects of teaching, provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, the work of the Language Resource Base and the enrichment opportunities provided beyond the day to day curriculum. Pupils learn well and are productive in lessons. Work with parents and the community is strong and pupils are well cared for by the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They are pleased with the leadership and management of the school and the regular communications they receive. The school has identified the need to consult more with parents on issues of school improvement. **Children enjoy coming to school.** Parents and pupils agree that this is largely because the school is a very friendly and welcoming place to be and is at the heart of the community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- Improve attendance
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body and, to meet statutory requirements
- Fulfil the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class from the nursery is well below the level expected for this age. Compared to other schools, standards at age seven in core subjects are below average and at age 11 they are very low. Standards in core subjects are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection compared to national averages, although, compared to similar schools, they are about the same in mathematics. Given children's attainment on entry to the school and other factors that have an impact on standards, achievement is good because pupils are well motivated and make good progress. Overall, pupils make better progress than they did at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils across the ability range achieve well and those that have been right through the school reach levels that would be expected given their standards at age seven
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well
- Pupils reach the national standard in ICT at age seven
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very low at age 11
- The school does not have a formal means of identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.3 (23.6)	26.8 (27)
Mathematics	22.9 (23.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	24.4 (24.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Standards are very low compared to other schools overall. Attainment on entry to the school is very low and there are other factors that have a major impact on standards. In English and mathematics standards are below average compared to similar schools and well below average in science. Trends in attainment are above the national trend for pupils aged seven but below the national trend for pupils aged 11. However, up to 2003 the trend for eleven-year-olds had been in line with the national trend. The 2003 group taking national tests included a high proportion of pupils who joined the school between Years 3 and 4, a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language.
2. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class from the Nursery as four year olds is well below the levels expected for this age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Reception indications are that despite good progress children's attainment in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development will still be well below average as a result of a significant proportion being in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Higher-attaining children reach the standards expected in all six areas of learning.

3. At age seven pupils' attainment in national tests in 2003 was well below average compared with all schools nationally but compared to similar schools reading was average and writing and mathematics above average.
4. A significant number of pupils join the school at times other than the usual time of admission or leave other than at the usual time of transfer. In the group that took national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2003, only 56 per cent had been at the school since Year 1. High levels of mobility have an impact on overall standards. The school tracks the progress of pupils and its data shows that, for example, no pupils who joined the school between ages seven and 11 achieved the nationally expected level in writing, whereas the others achieved levels that would have been expected given their attainment at age seven. A high percentage of pupils have a first language that is not English, and many join the school at an early stage of English language acquisition, which makes it more difficult for them to reach the levels expected for their age. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including Statements of Special Educational Needs, is well above average. Together, these factors help explain the low attainment at age 11.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. Teachers know their pupils well and plan for their individual needs. The support staff are well briefed in lessons. The care and support offered by their peers and the staff are good and this helps pupils to gain sufficient confidence to be fully involved in lessons. This helps pupils to achieve well.
6. In English, despite low attainment compared to national averages, pupils achieve well. Their speaking and listening skills are very well developed across the school. Early intervention strategies¹ are very successful in raising reading standards. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Achievement in creative writing is good across the school. However, the presentation of older pupils' work is unsatisfactory.
7. In mathematics all groups make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs do equally well because of the well co-ordinated support they receive, although many of their individual plans do not have specific numeracy targets. Minority ethnic pupils also do well. Early intervention programmes are helping the school to improve standards by the end of Year 2. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level by the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national test increased sharply from the previous year compared to similar schools. Such intervention strategies are not sufficiently developed in Years 3 to 6.
8. In science attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is well below the national average. The effective input of teachers and time invested by support staff have a positive impact on the progress which pupils make. This, combined with the pupils' eagerness to improve, ensures that all, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. However, investigative skills are well below average.
9. In information and communication technology pupils reach the national standard at age seven but are below average at age 11. In other subjects pupils achieve well and reach the national standard. In music their achievement is very high and standards are above average. Standards have improved in ICT, and are significantly higher in music, since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and learning are **good**. Attendance, whilst improving, is **unsatisfactory** but most pupils are punctual.

¹ Intervention strategies are ways in which the school provides intensive support to some pupils to help them catch up with others. Reading Recovery, Numeracy Recovery and support for pupils with English as an additional language are the main strategies used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is free from racism and bullying
- Pupils have respect for each other and their beliefs
- Pupils are appreciative of the diversity of cultural traditions that exist at the school
- Pupils have a great interest in school life and the range of activities that is offered
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and works hard to achieve good behaviour
- Attendance, although below the national average for similar schools, has improved over the past year

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	1.3
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.

10. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to school and learning. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. The authorised absence rate is now below the national average for similar schools but the unauthorised rate, whilst improving, remains well above that of similar schools. The attainment and achievement of the pupils concerned are seriously affected by these absences. Attendance would be higher if the number of extended family holidays in term-time was reduced. The school is becoming more rigorous in promoting better attendance.
11. Most children love coming to school. Parents and pupils agree that this is largely because the school is a very friendly and welcoming place and is at the heart of the community. Pupils' ability to listen, work productively together, concentrate and be independent develops well as they move up the school. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds have lots of opportunities to work and play together, in lessons and in activities outside of the school day. Parents are very pleased with the way the school helps their children to develop and mature.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	61	2	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	25	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	15	2	0

Ethnic background of pupils

Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

58	0	0
18	0	0
5	0	0
83	2	0
12	0	0

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

12. Pupils behave well in lessons because of staff's encouragement and expectations and because good behaviour is rewarded. Staff set a good example. They treat pupils firmly but fairly so that misbehaviour is quickly and effectively addressed. Exclusions have been reduced since the last inspection and in the current academic year there are none. Assemblies and the school's programme for personal, social and health education are used well to promote good behaviour and relationships. Pupils are constantly encouraged to think about how their actions affect others.
13. The staff promote pupils' moral and social development well and their cultural development very well. They act as good role models. Pupils' have a very good appreciation of their own culture as well as a good knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions of other pupils in the school. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop pupils' spiritual development through circle time, art and music and this is an improvement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Strengths include many aspects of teaching, provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, the work of the Language Resource Base and the enrichment opportunities provided beyond the day to day curriculum. Work with parents and the community is strong and pupils are well cared for by the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in all age groups. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good command of areas of learning for children under five and of National Curriculum subjects for pupils in other years
- Teachers plan effectively and encourage and engage pupils well
- They use effective teaching methods and use time and resources well
- Teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour creates a positive climate for learning
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets because teachers plan their lessons well to meet their specific needs
- Use of teaching assistants is very good in the Nursery and Reception, good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in other years; when supporting pupils with special educational needs, support staff are well briefed in lessons and the support they offer helps pupils to achieve well
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity very well
- Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good
- They are productive in lessons
- They have good capacity to work independently and collaboratively
- Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment but need to focus more on addressing specific difficulties that pupils have in reaching the national levels at age 11
- Pupils mostly understand what they have to improve but need clearer targets and strategies to help them

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	5 (12%)	21 (50%)	14 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Good teaching is evenly spread across the school. Consequently, most pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is some imaginative teaching that uses a range of resources effectively, including ICT, in order to engage pupils. Teachers mostly have a good understanding of pupils and the difficulties they are likely to have. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in all core subjects. Teaching in music is very good and leads to high achievement in the subject.
15. Teachers' command of areas of learning and subjects enables them to plan effectively. Teachers challenge pupils and are particularly effective in promoting speaking and listening. The Reading Recovery and Numeracy Recovery programmes are taught very well and contribute significantly to pupils' achievement. Opportunities for pupils to explain their answers in mathematics are too limited. In science, teachers devote insufficient time to improving pupils' investigative skills.
16. Lessons are busy, well paced and productive. Teachers' well-established classroom routines and insistence on high standards of behaviour lead to good work habits. Only occasionally do these standards slip. Mostly, pupils acquire new skills, concentrate well and show an ability to work both independently and collaboratively.
17. Teaching assistants are very effective in the Foundation Stage and their contribution is good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, there are some lessons where teaching assistants play a more passive role. New teaching assistants need training in order to become fully involved in the work of the class. The school has identified this as a priority. Bilingual teaching assistants make an important contribution, using pupils' mother tongue prudently to help them in their work.
18. Teachers make good use of homework to reinforce and extend what is learned in school. Parents agree that homework is regular and of good quality.
19. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly but need to focus more on those aspects that will enable pupils to reach age-related national levels at age 11. In mathematics, marking does not give sufficient information to pupils about how to improve. Teachers also need to improve the emphasis given to presentation and handwriting, which are frequently unsatisfactory and restrict standards in English.
20. As part of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, the school uses test results and teachers' knowledge of their pupils to identify potential difficulties. A scrutiny of the records shows teachers review pupils' progress regularly. The school has introduced review meetings involving class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the support staff. This helps to monitor progress more closely and share good practice. The school encourages parents to be involved in reviews. There is limited evidence of seeking pupils' views of their own learning.

The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities the school provides is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good
- Pupils have good equality of access and opportunity
- Pupils are well prepared for the later stages of education
- Curriculum development is very good
- Support for learning outside the school day is good
- Participation in the arts, particularly music, is very good
- The school is fully staffed with a good match of teachers to the curriculum

Commentary

21. The school's curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile activities to which pupils respond well and which ensures good progress in their learning. The school's curriculum has improved since the last inspection. In their questionnaires, pupils indicated that most find activities interesting and fun. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides well for pupils with special educational needs and for other groups. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects but there is little evidence of extended pieces of writing other than in English. There are appropriate links between mathematics and subjects such as science, humanities and design and technology. There is good use of ICT across the curriculum, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
22. The school provides a good programme of personal, social and health education that is reinforced through other activities. For example, the school places an emphasis on healthy eating in the food it serves and assemblies are based on themes that require pupils to consider concepts such as fairness.
23. The school provides activities that cater well for pupils from diverse backgrounds. The school's ethos enables pupils to feel secure. The school analyses how well individuals are achieving and is particularly successful in early intervention to support language and numeracy development in Years 1 and 2. Reading Recovery, Numeracy Recovery and work to support pupils with English as an additional language are important elements in the school's provision. The school is open to new ideas and readily sees the benefits of working with members of the wider community. Its music curriculum is very effectively planned and taught.
24. The school emphasises enrichment activities and provides a variety of regular activities outside the school day and trips to places of interest and special events. Music plays an important role and, just prior to the inspection, pupils had been involved in the parade at the Lord Mayor's Show. Opportunities to work with members of the London Symphony Orchestra add significantly to their learning. During the inspection pupils went to see the children's author Jacqueline Wilson to find out about how authors work.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are given equal access to the curriculum. The monitoring of the effectiveness of the provision is less well developed. There is no formal calendar of meetings between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the Language Resource Base co-ordinator to share expertise and good practice and utilise fully the expertise of the Language Resource Base staff. The resources to support pupils with special educational needs are good and staff and pupils make good use of these.

Care, guidance and support

The staff is caring and supportive and ensures the pupils work in a safe and healthy environment. The school provides effective support and guidance and involves pupils' satisfactorily in its work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for children starting school are good
- The care and welfare arrangements provided for the pupils are effective
- The arrangements for consulting with pupils about school improvement lack sufficient structure and regularity
- Breakfast Club and after-school provision is well used and valued by both parents and the pupils concerned

Commentary

26. Policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. Governors could be more involved in child protection issues and their responsibilities. Most staff know pupils well and recognise and respond to their individual needs. New pupils are helped to settle in quickly. A very good induction pack is provided for parents of nursery children. Parents of children arriving at the school for the first time are provided with a professionally made videocassette, describing the school and all it has to offer. Pupils and parents value the breakfast and after-school clubs. These are having a positive impact on children's personal development and achievement. Pupils say there is always someone they can go to for help.
27. There is no systematic and regular process to allow pupils' views to impact on the day-to-day life of the school. However, staff do consult pupils on a number of school issues, through circle time and assemblies. There are no regular consultations with pupils and systematic feedback to them on important school matters, through questionnaires for example. This part of the decision-making process remains untapped. Older pupils are given good opportunities to help the younger ones.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents that include educational support programmes provided for pupils and parents alike. There are **very effective** links with the community and **satisfactory** links with other schools in the area.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents like the way complaints and concerns are handled
- Parents believe that the leadership and management of the school are good
- Parents are not sufficiently enabled to make an effective contribution to their child's learning at home
- The provision of extended services for parents, such as The Parental Partnership and English as a Second Language groups, is very effective
- Links in the community continue to be extended since the last inspection and are now a significant strength of the school
- Communication with parents is effective but parents could be consulted more on their views
- Links with other schools and transfer arrangements need to be improved

Commentary

28. The school works hard to involve parents and to inform them about their children's progress. Despite the school's efforts, however, the majority of parents are not contributing effectively to their children's learning at home. Homework is given consistently and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Good communication between teachers and parents is regular and end-of-term academic reports keep parents well informed of their child's progress. There is a parents' room situated in the school and this is well used. Most parents say the school handles any concerns or complaints in an effective manner. There are good opportunities for parents to meet with staff on a daily, informal basis and minor issues get resolved quickly. A

home-school link worker has recently been appointed and has already been able to engage a number of parents, including those from various ethnic minority backgrounds, in literacy and craft activities. Parents are pleased with the leadership and management of the school and the regular communications they receive. The school has identified the need to consult more with parents on issues of school improvement.

29. Links in the community are very good and a significant strength of the school. The school is motivated to provide facilities for the community to the greatest extent possible.
30. The school has correctly identified the need for educational support programmes for both parents and pupils. The Shoreditch "Our Way" project (SHOW) is aimed at improving the reading skills of Year 1 pupils and the numerical skills of Year 2 pupils. The Parental Partnership organises literacy classes for parents in an effort to raise their attainment, particularly for those parents with English as an additional language. This provision is already benefiting those involved.
31. The exchange of information on pupils with partner schools is satisfactory overall and better with pre-school groups. The school has identified the need to improve liaisons with other primary schools and particularly with secondary schools that are situated out of the immediate area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations
- Strategic planning is good and has enabled the school to reach some ambitious goals, such as establishing Reading Recovery and Numeracy Recovery and making strong and wide ranging links with the community
- Leaders in the school help staff create effective teams which, in turn, leads to well motivated staff and pupils
- School leadership is strongly committed to inclusion, promotion of equality of opportunity and concern for the needs of individuals
- Induction of staff, their continuing professional development and the school's management of recruitment, retention, deployment and workload are good
- The school has effective financial management that enables it to achieve educational priorities
- The school applies the principles of best value well
- In its self-evaluation and monitoring of performance data, the school has developed a high level view of its work but misses some simple things to improve standards in the classroom
- Governors need to plan more time to find out for themselves how things are going in the school

Commentary

32. The headteacher's leadership is principled, well established and dynamic. He has a very clear vision of how he sees the school developing as a centre for the local community and also has the confidence and leadership skills to make things happen. For example, he has successfully found funding for initiatives and has established very effective links with the community. Parents have a high opinion of how the school is run and those attending the parents' meeting say that there has been a significant change for the better in the school due largely to the headteacher's leadership. School leaders have created teams that focus effectively on the school's priorities, particularly reflected in the work of the Language Resource Base, support for pupils with English as an additional language and in Literacy and Numeracy Recovery programmes. Provision for special educational needs is good. Good quality teaching reflects a staff with a shared understanding of the school's goals.

33. The school is well managed. It is a more complex organisation than many schools due to the combination of challenges the school faces and the range of strategies it uses, which demand careful deployment of staff and resources. The school is efficiently organised. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. All staff, including support staff, are subject to the school's performance management system, which is based on a well defined and appropriate process. The school is able to sustain its work, despite considerable staff turnover, through effective management systems. For example, co-ordinators for core subjects have assistant co-ordinators, providing effective back up. However, the lack of a co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is a weakness, despite the good quality of work by the Foundation Stage team. The deputy-headteacher has been caretaker co-ordinator for religious education for a long time and this also needs resolving. The school has effective recruitment and attracts suitably qualified and committed staff.
34. The school collects and analyses performance data and has a firm grasp of the achievement of groups of pupils, broken down by ethnicity and gender. It has a secure overall picture that enables it to take strategic decisions. The school is well aware of its weaknesses and does not make any excuses regarding national test results. Investment in Reading Recovery, Numeracy Recovery and support for pupils with English as an additional language is leading to higher achievement. However, there is insufficient focus on helping individual teachers address specific problems that pupils have in core subjects in order to raise their attainment to the next level and improve standards at age 11. In Years 1 and 2 the school has put into place very effective early intervention strategies to enable pupils to catch-up and make good progress. It has identified the need to develop a mid-entry induction programme for pupils joining the school between Year 3 and Year 6.
35. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ask probing questions in order to gain a better understanding of the school's national test results. This has led to governors seeking further clarification from the headteacher and school staff. Governors have designated monitoring and evaluation responsibilities as part of the school improvement plan but do not have a planned programme of visits or established links with subjects to enable them to gain insight into the day to day work of the school. Therefore, while they have a strategic view, they do not have sufficient means to find out how things are going through direct contact with the work of the school. They rely on the headteacher to report to them on developments. They recognise that governors with responsibilities for key aspects of the school's work would gain a better understanding through observing school policies in practice. Governors strongly support the work of the headteacher. They have an appropriate performance management system in place to set objectives for the headteacher and all other statutory requirements are in place.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,145,610	Balance from previous year	17,073
Total expenditure	955,729	Balance carried forward to the next	79,966
Expenditure per pupil	3,144		

36. Through the headteacher's leadership, the school has been successful in finding external funding that has enabled it to expand, significantly, what it provides. Other support from the community, such as the considerable in-pu of volunteers from a City law firm, adds significantly to other school resources. Resources are carefully targeted and the impact of spending decisions is evident in the school's work. Examples include:

- improvements in ICT provision leading to higher achievement
- investment in early intervention, leading to improvements in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2

- investment in music provision, leading to very good achievement
- effective use of funding for special educational needs and ethnic minorities leading to good achievement by these groups.

37. The school's application of the principles of best value is good. The school compares its performance with other schools both nationally and locally. The school compares tenders for large-scale projects. The school challenges itself about what it could do and this is reflected in its curriculum development and extended provision. Parents are consulted, using questionnaires and meetings. The school intends to set up a school council to improve its consultation with pupils. It does involve pupils, particularly in Year 6, in decision making and widely consulted with pupils on how to improve school lunches.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of community provision?

The school's community provision is **very good** and continues to develop.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established itself as a centre of the local community and continues to plan initiatives
- The impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence and on school ethos is excellent
- Links with local organisations and businesses enable the school to extend, significantly, its curriculum provision and learning opportunities
- English classes for parents reflect a commitment to extending learning opportunities across the whole school community

Commentary

38. Thomas Fairchild is a community school. It is an integral part of the area, which it serves very well. A City law firm provides ever increasing numbers of employees to come into school daily to hear children read as well as receiving, by email, their contributions of creative writing. They also engage pupils in numerical tasks and a chess club. These activities are highly productive and are having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and helping to raise their self-esteem. The firm also supplies representatives for the school's governing body.

39. Around 40 local businesses come together annually to talk to the pupils about the world of work. There are opportunities for children to visit various places of employment in the locality as a result.

40. There is a "Big Arts Week" when photographers and musicians visit the school. Pupils have the opportunity to sing in a choir, play percussion, brass and string instruments and learn to take photographs. Some pupils go on to perform in concert at The Barbican, as part of The London Symphony Orchestra's "Discovery Programme". Others show their photographic work in an official exhibition at an art gallery. These high quality outside visits enrich curricular provision.

41. A weekend club has recently been started at the school, by a local educational trust. A good number of pupils attend and the activities provided include English, Turkish, mathematics and science.

What is the effectiveness of the work of the Language Resource Base?

The provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties in the Language Resource Base is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities pupils have to work along side their peers are very good
- There is a team effort to supporting pupils' needs between the specialist teachers, class teachers and the support staff. This helps pupils to achieve well and to develop their social skills
- The leadership provided by the teacher in charge of the base is very good
- There is very little evidence of pupil involvement in reviews
- There is insufficient liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teacher in charge of the base to share expertise and good practice

Commentary

42. The base offers 16 places for pupils with significant speech and language difficulties between the ages of 5 -11 who fall under the admission criteria set by the authorities. All the pupils attending the base have Statements of Special Educational Need. They come from different parts of Hackney.
43. There is a good balance between focused withdrawal support in the base and in-class small group support with their peers. This helps pupils to make good progress in their social skills alongside their speech and language skills. Class teachers give particular attention to involving pupils in whole class discussions and use lesson planning effectively to engage and extend pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are confident to take part fully in lessons and they contribute well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching and support offered by the specialists are consistently good. Discussion with a group of pupils indicates that they are clear about the class rules and the general routines of the day. Some pupils were able to indicate what they like to do best although many have difficulties in expressing them.
44. The systematic assessment and review of pupils' progress and the support they receive help pupils to make good progress. As a result, two pupils have left the base to join the mainstream and another group of pupils is now supported all the time in the mainstream. There is very little evidence of pupils being given opportunities to evaluate their own learning. Pupils in the base have full access to the curriculum. The lunch time club enables pupils to learn their social skills and follow their particular interests along side main stream pupils. There is a need to use other forms of communication like 'Makaton' as more and more younger pupils with severe speech and language difficulties are joining the school. This is one of the areas identified for further development by the specialist staff in the base.
45. The management of the base is very good. There is an effective team approach and staff are clear about what works well and what they need to improve. The specialist teachers provide in-service training for other members of staff. There is very little opportunity for the base leader and the special educational needs co-ordinator to meet to discuss whole school issues or share the good practice. The resources to support pupils' learning in the base are good and they are used effectively by both staff and pupils. There are good links established between parents and the base staff. Parents speak highly of the support they receive.

What is the effectiveness of provision for pupils with English as an additional language?

The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very well managed
- Teachers are experienced and knowledgeable in this aspect
- The school has effective strategies to support pupils
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well

Commentary

46. A high percentage of the school population comes from homes where English is not the first language. Significant proportions of pupils enter school with English at a very early stage of development, some with no knowledge of the language. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language varies across year groups, for example, amongst the last Year 6 cohort 75 per cent of pupils were in this group.
47. The school devotes considerable energy and resources to support these pupils. There is a co-ordinator funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and 20 per cent of all teaching assistant time is paid for in this way. Teachers are very experienced and knowledgeable in the techniques for developing a second language and practices such as "Talking Partners", evident in all aspects of school life, have a very beneficial effect on speaking and listening skills. Teachers use visual stimuli well and place pupils at early levels of acquisition with groups who will model the language well. Pupils have language "buddies" so that they do not feel isolated in the playground. The older pupils are used to support younger and these more mature pupils also act as translators for parents.
48. The systems in place to track the language development of pupils through the different stages of learning English are very good. The co-ordinator has established these and has also been successful in establishing teams that meet regularly in each class to assess progress and need. A considerable number of other measures are in place to support pupils and their families. For example, there are meetings with families to inform them how they can help their children with homework. All school meetings are translated into four languages and first language development is encouraged through a community Saturday school which teaches English, mathematics and science in Turkish. To improve further provision the school should consider supporting pupils who have reached a level of basic competence in English but still need the extra help with language structure and grammar to reach their full potential.
49. Pupils with English as additional language achieve as well as their peers, especially if they have started school in the Nursery or Reception class. Although pupils who join with little English in Years 3 to 6 might not reach the nationally expected levels in the tests for 11-year-olds they are achieving well. Research shows that it takes on average seven years to develop the second language skills needed to reach academic potential. These new arrivals are very well supported.

What is the effectiveness of provision for ethnic minority achievement?

The provision for ethnic minority achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement by ethnic minority pupils is good
- Provision is well managed
- The school's ethos fosters racial harmony and respect and this in turn promotes positive attitudes to work in school

Commentary

50. At the time of the inspection three quarters of the school population were from ethnic minorities. The main body of the report, therefore, comments upon their achievement and the inspection found that there is no underachievement by particular groups.
51. The school monitors results carefully to ensure equality of opportunity. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language (EAL) has the wider responsibility for ethnic minority achievement and many of the good aspects of the provision for EAL pupils benefit the wider school population.

52. An important feature, which underpins the achievement of all ethnic groups within the school, is the degree of racial harmony and respect. In a range of subject areas pupils are encouraged to celebrate their cultural origins and traditions, for example, the recent comprehensive study for "Black History Month". Pupils express their disgust at racism and discrimination and are aware that their teachers share their views.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class from the Nursery as four-year-olds in September and January is well below the levels expected for this age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, social and emotional development, as well as knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Reception indications are that despite good progress children's attainment in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development will still be well below as a result of a significant proportion being in the early stages of learning English as an extra language. Higher-attaining children reach the standards expected in all six areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction programme
- Good teamwork
- Good liaison between Nursery and Reception
- Good teaching in Nursery and Reception
- Opportunities to develop language skills not always followed up
- Work occasionally not matched to children's abilities
- Good use made of outdoor areas

Commentary

53. Induction arrangements are good. Positive links, including home visits, with an interpreter, are established with parents, the majority of whom support the work of the school well. Good examples were noted during the inspection when parents supported in the Nursery. Good shared information between all teachers in the Foundation Stage ensures that all members of staff are aware of standards prior to children entering the Reception class. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The overall management of the Foundation Stage, awaiting the imminent appointment of a new co-ordinator but currently overseen by the headteacher, is satisfactory.
54. Due to good overall teaching in both the Nursery and Reception and time invested wisely by other adults, children, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. Occasionally when work is not matched appropriately to children's needs progress is not so good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide good role models
- Good teaching
- Good balance of free choice and directed activities
- Children start with limited personal and social skills
- Good opportunities for learning through play

Commentary

55. The children's personal and social development is given high priority and to good effect, with learning in this area generally good. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices about their activities, such as playing with sand and water or constructing models from plastic

cubes. The good emphasis on the play curriculum in the Nursery ensures that children's development of language, mathematical and social skills is enhanced. All adults act as very good role models and help children to form positive relationships and care for others. As a result, children become more confident and feel secure.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High level of support for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language
- Good teaching
- Good deployment of staff
- Attainment well below average
- Opportunities to develop language not always followed up

Commentary

56. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy throughout the Foundation Stage. This is due mainly to the effective dialogue between children and adults and the opportunity to extend thinking and communication skills through play, for example, when engaging in pretend conversations while bathing dolls or building roads, tunnels and bridges using plastic and wooden blocks. The majority listens attentively and uses appropriate vocabulary in response to the teachers' questions. The contribution of the nursery officer in the Nursery is particularly effective in this respect. However, opportunities to develop children's language skills during free-choice play activities are not always used fully. A significant number, especially those for whom English is an additional language, is still in the early developmental stage of language and literacy. Nevertheless these children make constant improvement as a result of the teachers' hard work and purposeful learning atmosphere. By the time they complete the Reception year overall attainment is still well below what is expected for this age group.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children start with very low mathematical skills
- Teaching is good
- Attainment at age of five is well below expectations

Commentary

57. Children enter the Nursery with few mathematical skills but they make good progress and achieve well due to good teaching. Children, especially those for whom English is an additional language, need constant support to count objects accurately but staff ensure that every opportunity is taken to develop this skill. In this respect the nursery officer's time is invested well. Some higher-attainers identify and name two-dimensional shapes by the end of the Nursery year. By the end of the Reception year higher-attainers count confidently to 20 and some carry out simple addition and subtraction to 5 but with support.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of outside environment

Commentary

58. Children enter the Nursery with a limited general knowledge and for many their lack of English makes progress difficult. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes they begin to understand more about the place in which they live and how they and others grow from babies to adulthood. They begin to understand some computer uses and many move the mouse accurately to paint pictures and complete simple mathematical problems. During lessons they investigate construction materials and enjoy designing and making model houses and bridges. The school's outside environment, including the 'wild garden', provides good opportunities for nature and scientific work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well through play
- Insufficient use is made of three and four wheeled vehicles

Commentary

59. By the end of the Reception year children's physical development is in line with what is expected nationally from this age. Through play with table-top games, modelling materials such as play-dough, brushes and crayons, they are improving their control, as observed in both the Nursery and infant classes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress through play in movement and co-ordination skills. They respond well to instructions and are developing an appropriate awareness of space and consideration for others while moving around, as observed in a Reception music and movement lesson. They develop good co-ordination and confidence as they move on and off apparatus, illustrated well in a Nursery activity during an outdoor balancing session.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for role-play are good
- Opportunities for artwork are good
- Sometimes play activities lack sufficient monitoring

Commentary

60. Children are presented with interesting creative activities each day and the balance between free-choice and more structured work is good. The opportunities are good for using different media and children are developing satisfactory skills in handling paint brushes, threads, scissors, glue-sticks and collage materials while painting and making friezes. They play imaginatively with resources and equipment, as observed during a Nursery lesson exploring media and materials. In role-play they enjoy activities in the play corner but sometimes these lack monitoring, which results in many children preferring to play alongside rather than with others. Children enjoy singing and keeping time to music, as seen in a Nursery lesson where singing in tune and interpreting sounds were enhanced.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well below average
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well
- Speaking and listening skills are very well developed across the school
- Early intervention strategies are very successful in raising reading standards
- The support for pupils with English as an additional language is very good
- Creative writing is of a high standard across the school
- The presentation of work by older pupils is unsatisfactory

Commentary

61. Standards in English are well below the national average. Pupils enter the school with attainment well below the standards found nationally. High proportions of pupils have English as an additional language, with many at a very early stage. Pupils who enter the school in the Nursery or Reception class, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This is as a result of good, well structured teaching. Those who enter further up the school, especially those who enter in Years 3 to 6, do not achieve the levels expected. A major factor explaining these results is the length of time that it takes to develop the range of skills in a second language to achieve full academic success.
62. There are very well developed strategies for developing speaking and listening. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to discuss their understanding of the concepts being taught. Pupils talk with partners and in a range of well-constructed groupings. For example, those at an early stage of English will be placed with other pupils with a more mature grasp of the language. Pupils with the same first language will often help each other and bilingual teaching assistants perform an invaluable role. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils, including those who entered the school with no English, can take part in lively debate and develop ideas and opinions thoughtfully.
63. Reading skills are well developed through the school. The resources for reading are good and are extremely well organised to ensure that pupils continually meet new and appropriate challenges. The Reading Recovery system, which operates in Year 1, is very successful in giving a boost to those who are struggling at this early stage. The teaching in these sessions is of a very high standard, enabling pupils to make very rapid progress. Pupils in Year 6 are well supported by a mentoring system, with adults from the law firm linked with the school hearing pupils read regularly.
64. The standards of written work seen during the inspection show great variation. The general level of descriptive, imaginative and creative writing is good and in some cases very moving as it reflects aspects of the environment in which pupils are growing up. A Year 6 boy wrote the following:
- “London can be frightening
people booting, people shooting
everybody scooting.
For a bit it is scary
but you get used to it.
People killing
People thrilling
Everybody chilling...:
65. However, this quality is too frequently let down by the standard of handwriting and presentation. By the end of primary school pupils are expected to use fluent and joined handwriting but written work shows very few achieving this. Joined writing is starting to be developed in Year 2 but has not become established across the whole school.

66. The subject leaders have done very well in establishing and implementing strategies, like Reading Recovery and Talking Partners, which are having a beneficial effect on pupil achievement. To raise standards further there is a need for closer analysis of test results to highlight exactly where written work in particular needs improving. Pupils attend booster groups in Year 6 but intervention, which is successful in Years 1 and 2, could be continued in Years 3 to 5, particularly to support the development of correct grammatical structure for those with English as an additional language.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well across the curriculum but there is little evidence of extended pieces of writing in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages and pupils make good progress
- The good early intervention strategies in Key Stage 1, such as the Numeracy Recovery programme, are helping pupils to make rapid progress from a very low starting point
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' computation skills
- The standards in mathematics are below and well below the national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- There is insufficient emphasis on problem solving and the use of ICT
- There is insufficient focus on identifying particular aspects and groups for early intervention programmes in Key Stage 2

Commentary

68. The standards in mathematics overall are well below the national averages. In the 2003 national tests just over three quarters of pupils in Year 2 and just under half of pupils in Year 6 attained the expected standards; a significant proportion of the pupils in Year 6 started the school half-way through Years 3 to 6. Inspection evidence indicates that on the whole the school does well for its pupils with all groups making good progress and achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Resource Base, do equally well because of the well co-ordinated support they receive from the class teachers, the support staff and the specialist teachers. However, many of the individual plans do not have specific numeracy targets. Minority ethnic pupils also do well. More able pupils in both key stages make good progress overall. The identification and support of borderline achievers in Years 1 and 2 through intervention programmes are helping the school to improve the standards by the end of Year 2. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level by the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national test has increased sharply from the previous year and compared to similar schools. Such intervention strategies are not sufficiently developed in Years 3 to 6, although the school has offered some support through booster classes for Year 6 pupils in the past.

69. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve the provision for mathematics. The quality of teaching and learning has improved throughout school. The consistently good teaching, including the teaching offered by Numeracy Recovery team, enables pupils to make rapid progress by the end of Year 2. Most pupils enter school with very low level numeracy skills and by the end of Year 2 a large proportion of these pupils are working within the expected range for their age in their knowledge and understanding of number and number relations. Their knowledge and skills in applying these to solve simple problems are well below what is expected of them nationally. The overall good teaching in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils to sustain the good

progress they make in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to apply their knowledge about number facts to solve simple addition and subtraction. By Year 6, although pupils have a sound understanding of multiplication tables of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 and are working out simple fractions, they find it difficult to interpret whole word problems and apply their knowledge and skills to solving them.

70. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Work in pupils' books shows very few examples of their understanding of other mathematical concepts such as measure or on the application of their skills to solve problems. The use of computers to practise and extend pupils' numeracy skills is underdeveloped in both key stages.
71. Teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. The teaching seen in all the lessons in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6 it ranges from satisfactory to very good and it is good overall. The teaching observed in Year 6 is good and that observed in Year 4 is very good. The strengths include:
- Careful planning with clear learning objectives which are based on what pupils know and understand
 - Effective use of resources and methods to capture pupils' interests and extend their learning
 - Well briefed support staff and specialist teachers who offer effective small group and individual support. This helps pupils to make good progress
 - Good relationships with pupils ensuring pupils' confidence to take part fully in lessons
 - Time used efficiently to check understanding and reinforce learning points effectively
72. In some lessons, pupils are given insufficient opportunity to explain how they have worked out their answers in whole class sessions. In a few lessons, whole class sessions are used less well to extend and challenge the more able pupils.
73. The school uses data well to analyse trends in standards. They are used less well in identifying and supporting specific aspects of mathematics or particular groups of pupils to improve standards, especially in Years 3 to 6. Marking of pupils work is inconsistent and does not always tell pupils how they can improve. Pupils and staff make effective use of good resources. Effective links are established between the school, the local business and the parents to improve the provision. The co-ordinator and assistant co-ordinator, both of whom are fairly new to the post, work well together as a team and have successfully identified what needs to be improved. There is no established, regular pattern of monitoring to identify and share good practice.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Little evidence was seen in lessons of mathematics across the curriculum although pupils' work and displays show some links between mathematics and subjects such as science, humanities and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of outside environment to study life processes and living things
- Good opportunities for collaborative work
- Limited opportunities for investigative work
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of fair testing limited
- Scarcity of recording, especially in Year 3 to Year 6 range
- Achievement good when prior attainment considered

Commentary

75. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is well below the national average. This differs slightly from the previous inspection when it was in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. Over the past five years the trend in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils has been upward and in line with those nationally, although standards have been lower. The significant factors contributing to these low scores are the high proportion of pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and higher than average pupil mobility. The effective input of teachers and time invested by support staff have a positive impact on the progress which these pupils make. Good teaching, combined with the pupils' eagerness to improve, ensures that pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
76. Examination of the pupils' work and discussion with them show that investigative skills are well below average. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area for imminent development in the science action plan. Higher-attaining pupils know that a test has to be fair but could not explain how to set it up. The weekly science club enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific processes, especially good use of the outside gardens to sow seeds and tend the resultant plants and flowers from shoots to full bloom.
77. Teaching throughout the school is good. The vast majority of teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to explain scientific processes. A good example was observed in a Year 6 class studying evaporation and condensation. Teachers pay particular attention to developing pupils' understanding of specific scientific vocabulary, especially for the significant proportion for whom English is an extra language. They provide good opportunities in class for discussion but the very concise written work that follows indicates limited knowledge and understanding in relation to their ages.
78. The co-ordinator, who is keen to raise standards, leads and manages the subject satisfactorily overall. With the recent introduction of a more formal assessment system and plans for more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's capacity to improve standards is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of ICT across the curriculum, although more use should be made in mathematics
- Good technical support
- Co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic
- Limited use of sensors and control, especially in the Years 3 to 6 age range

Commentary

79. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations and below at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below national expectations at the end of both of these year groups. This is a particular achievement as national expectations are now much higher. Pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory due to satisfactory and sometimes good teaching, aided by pupils' own willingness to learn.
80. All classes have weekly and sometimes twice weekly access to an updated and fully networked suite, complete with interactive white board. Other computers placed strategically in classrooms and other areas throughout the school are used effectively to enhance their ICT skills, as observed in a Year 1 English lesson using word banks to construct sentences. Year 6 pupils'

emailing abilities are good, due to their long-standing and regular correspondence with a firm of city solicitors. The opportunity to use sensors and control is less well developed.

81. The subject is managed and led well by a knowledgeable and keen advocate. She is supported well by a technician (a voluntary parent-helper) on a regular basis. This is an effective partnership. She has been in post for less than a term but has already commenced to monitor teaching and learning. Assessment is in the early stages of being implemented fully throughout the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. The co-ordinator has worked hard to build up a library of software to support the use of ICT across the curriculum. Satisfactory examples were observed in geography and history work, for example research on mountain ranges and Ancient Greeks respectively. Teachers use ICT programs regularly to reinforce key learning points in numeracy and literacy lessons, as observed during an analysis of Year 2 work on measuring distance. In art they use drawing options to rotate and resize graphics and pictures after the style of Matisse's 'The Snail'. The use of ICT across the curriculum since the last inspection is a significant improvement.

HUMANITIES

83. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one lesson seen in history. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

84. A particular strength of both subjects is the degree to which the humanities are used to reinforce pupils' pride in their cultural identity. Work obviously concentrates largely on the history and geography of Britain but pupils are also encouraged to learn more about their "home" countries and share this with others. In history an extensive project was carried out recently on "Black History Month". Pupils learned about the range of people from minority ethnic groups who have contributed to the national life across a range of fields including black scientists, explorers, mathematicians, writers and politicians. The one history lesson seen concentrated on broad aspects of Victorian life and included the opportunity for pupils to interrogate web sites to find information about prominent black citizens of the era.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in both key stages have a sound understanding of the religions they have studied
- Religious education is used well to develop pupils' literacy skills
- There is no member of staff with overall responsibility for managing the subject, similar to the position reported in the last inspection

Commentary

85. Standards of attainment at Years 2 and 6 during inspection remain in line with the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the last inspection. Only two lessons were observed in religious education so no reliable judgement can be made on the overall teaching. Analysis of the available work, the displays around the school and talking to pupils indicate that all pupils achieve satisfactorily.

86. In the lessons seen, the teaching in Year 1 was good and that observed in a Year 3/4 class was satisfactory. In the good lesson the teacher used the methods well to engage and extend all pupils and they made good progress. In the satisfactory lesson the questioning strategies were

less effective in extending pupils' knowledge and skills. In both key stages pupils are gaining a sound understanding of facts about religions as well as how to apply what they have learned to their lives. Year 6 pupils could talk about the specific features of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. Year 3 pupils' work on reflecting the significance of light in Diwali celebrations and Year 5 pupils' work on producing five golden rules of good living based on the teaching of Buddha indicate that pupils can apply what they have learned from them. Year 2 pupils know the different places of worship. They can talk about their trip to the mosque. There are some good examples of cross-curricular links with other subjects such as English, art and design and design and technology.

87. The curriculum planning is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The assessment and monitoring of the subject are weak.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. Only two lessons were seen in art and design and no lessons were seen in physical education. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement about their provision.

89. Displayed work shows that in **art and design** pupils in Years 1 and 2 experience a good range of activities that is fully in line with statutory requirements. Their work is at the level expected for their age, showing good exploration of contrasting materials, secure understanding of composing elements to make a whole and effective use of ideas from a variety of artists and cultures. Teachers have made very good use of masks from different cultures, textiles from Nigeria and Chinese watercolour painting to inspire the pupils. Good attention is paid to using numeracy skills to measure and judge proportion. Teaching in the Year 5 and Year 6 lessons observed included well-chosen resources and materials. Pupils work at the levels expected for their age and take great interest in their work, showing good levels of independence.

Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop ideas and explain them clearly while designing
- Pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of materials and components

Commentary

90. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations, which is similar to the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed, in which teaching was satisfactory. An analysis of the pupils' work and discussion with them indicate that all, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, learn and achieve satisfactorily.

91. In the lesson observed the pupils discussed sensibly and animatedly the reasons for choosing specific materials and adhesives, and the techniques for designing and making stable picture frames. The structure and use of mechanisms, for example cams, levers and pulleys, is not developed satisfactorily.

92. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, is eager to raise the subject's profile and plans to carry out an immediate audit. The scheme of work adapts the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance. The resources for design and technology are satisfactory.

Music

The provision in music is **very good** and is a **strength** of the **school**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are above the national expectation and in singing they are well above the expected levels
- The accommodation and resources are very good and used well to improve pupils' skills and knowledge
- All pupils achieve well and make very good progress because of the very good teaching they receive from the specialist teacher
- The management of the subject is excellent and the teacher's enthusiasm, commitment and high expectations of her pupils bring about enjoyment and excellence in pupils' performance

Commentary

93. The standards in music are above the national expectations through out school. There has been a marked improvement in standards and pupils' achievement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 explore how sounds can be organised and have a good understanding of pitch. Pupils in Year 6 can identify and explore different musical devices and are beginning to perform significant parts from memory. In an excellent lesson observed in a Years 5/6 class, where pupils were refining and improving the performance they have done for the Lord Mayor's show, all pupils showed a growing awareness of their contribution such as leading others or providing rhythmic support. The feeling their performance created in the audience and the enjoyment and pride it created amongst the pupils are clear indications of the quality of their performance.
94. The quality of teaching is consistently very good with one excellent lesson observed. The teacher uses her excellent subject knowledge to explain how things are done and uses her questioning strategies to involve all pupils. In the lessons where the class teachers were present, they took an active role in supporting pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
95. Very good links are established between music and ICT. Pupils are taught to consolidate and extend their musical skills through the use of specific computer programs. There is a good link between science and music. The resources are very good and the music room is used well to extend pupils' skills. There are very good links with community and other organisations such as the London Symphony Orchestra. There is a very active school choir. The school runs after-school classes in guitar and keyboard. The assessment procedures are used well in identifying the progress pupils' make. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught to develop confidence and responsibility
- They learn to play an active role as citizens
- The school strongly promotes healthy eating
- Pupils develop good relationships

Commentary

96. Although no personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons were observed during the inspection a range of other evidence was available, including a discussion with pupils about PSHE. Pupils have good opportunities to explain opinions on matters important to them. Year 6 pupils, in class meetings, take complaints to the school management with suggestions, for example, that they should have a fruit store. In circle time, pupils are able to talk about problems and feelings in a secure environment. They also study children's rights and last year

produced a piece of drama on citizenship, about keeping the environment healthy. This is reflected in each class having recycling bins for paper. The school has had national television coverage due to its promotion of healthy eating through its school meals, particularly organic produce, which is also available to parents. Last year, Year 6 pupils were involved in working with architects to improve a staircase in the school in order to make it less threatening and more friendly to users. This project involved some key PSHE elements, including taking responsibility, working as a team with visitors from outside the school and consideration about the needs of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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