

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100836

Headteacher: Mrs M Perkins

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 May 2001

Inspection number: 197306

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 48 Brayards Road
Peckham
London

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms N O'Hare

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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17932	John Bald	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Special educational needs	How well are the pupils taught?
			Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
9958	Tim Page	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10270	Sandra Teacher	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
			Mathematics	
			Geography	
27736	Jeremy Collins	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			Information and communication technology	
27895	Margaret Skinner	Team inspector	English	
			Art and design	
			History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Saint Mary Magdalene is a Voluntary Aided, Church of England primary school in inner London. It is of average size, with 200 pupils, aged four to eleven. A very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, chiefly African-Caribbean and African, and just under a fifth are white. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, and an average proportion has been identified as having special educational needs, often related to behaviour. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is very high at 30 per cent, and a small number are refugees in the early stages of learning English. Many pupils join and leave the school part-way through their primary education. Most pupils joining the school have reached below-average standards for their age, and the school's social and economic context is unfavourable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is not providing effective education. As a result, in the main, of a very high turnover of temporary teachers, teaching is unsatisfactory overall, and often has serious weaknesses that damage learning. Standards are well below average, and much lower than they should be. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, though they have weaknesses. Value for money is unsatisfactory.

What the school does well

- The oldest pupils have good attitudes to learning and make good progress.
- Pupils develop an interest in books and enjoy reading.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development are good, and they develop confidence and self-esteem.
- The school takes good care of pupils' welfare, health and safety.

What could be improved

- Management and leadership are satisfactory overall, but have weaknesses.
- Standards in most subjects are well below average or lower.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, and at times poor.
- The range of learning opportunities is too narrow and does not meet legal requirements.
- The school does not assess and track learning effectively.
- There is too much poor behaviour in some classes.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

In accordance with section 13 (7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected, in March 1997, standards were broadly average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects ranged from average to below average. Teaching was unsatisfactory to poor in a fifth of lessons, because of a succession of temporary teachers in one class. The school had a good climate for learning and was managed well, but the building was seriously inadequate.

There has been a serious decline in the quality of education since the last inspection. The school now relies more heavily on temporary teachers. While two-thirds of their work during the inspection was satisfactory or better, the worst was very poor. Standards have suffered

greatly from this and are overall well below average to very low, especially in writing. Attempts to improve planning, and tracking of pupils' progress, have failed because the school has had no opportunity to establish consistency. Some subjects are hardly taught at all. The school moved to a new building some weeks before the inspection. This provides improved accommodation, though it has no secure play area for children up to five. The school's management has kept a clear sense of direction, and has suitable priorities for improvement, but has faced insuperable problems in staffing. It will not be in a position to move the school forward until this situation improves.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	C	E	D
mathematics	E	D	E*	E
science	E	D	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The grade E* indicates that results in 2000 in mathematics and science were in the lowest five per cent for all schools nationally. A slight recovery in results in 1999 was not sustained. During the inspection, standards in English and mathematics at eleven were well below average, but standards in science had recovered slightly, and were below average. Standards in most other subjects are well below average, with very low standards in information and communication technology, design and technology and geography. Eleven-year-olds reach broadly average standards in art and physical education, with good standards in swimming. There was too little evidence to support a judgement on standards in music, but the standard of work seen was broadly average, with good singing in assemblies.

Standards at seven are well below average in English, mathematics, science and almost all other subjects. A small number of seven-year-olds cannot read at all. Children up to five start with below average standards for their age, and standards are still below average by the time they start work on the National Curriculum. Their progress during the inspection was satisfactory in the areas of learning they worked on, but achievement was unsatisfactory overall as they were not studying the full recommended curriculum for their age group.

Achievement in the school as a whole is unsatisfactory, and standards are getting worse over time. Boys are achieving less well than girls in most classes, and standards and progress are particularly poor in all subjects which involve writing. The school's targets for improvement are not always based on full information, and are ineffective. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are not achieving the standards they should, chiefly because there is too little effective additional support for them. However, the overwhelming reason for low standards is the high turnover of pupils and of teachers. One class had had 20 temporary teachers in the year prior to the inspection, and the standards reached by almost all pupils in the school during the inspection were affected to some degree by similar experiences.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Almost all pupils are willing to learn, although most need a strong lead from their teacher. The oldest pupils have good attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory overall, though chiefly in response to unsatisfactory teaching. Behaviour in the playground is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Unsatisfactory overall. Most pupils show satisfactory development from the very limited social skills they start with, but the impact of the worst teaching on pupils' personal development is severe.
Attendance	Below average, with a high rate of unauthorised absence, but improving. The school has good arrangements to promote attendance.

Pupils develop good attitudes to reading, including the use of the public library. Behaviour in lessons worsens rapidly when pupils are not fully engaged in their learning, and at worst it is very poor.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 73 per cent of lessons, and very good in 5 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory or worse in 27 per cent of lessons, and poor or very poor in 10 per cent. There was much further evidence of unsatisfactory to very poor teaching in the work pupils had done over the year. The teaching of children up to five was satisfactory, but covered too narrow a range of activities.

Teaching during the inspection was never less than satisfactory for pupils aged ten and eleven, though there were gaps in the learning of ten-year-olds earlier in the school year. Eleven-year-olds are well taught, with very good teaching in some lessons. In other classes, the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory, with good features, to poor. Two thirds of lessons taught by temporary teachers were satisfactory or good, but the remainder were unsatisfactory to very poor. There is serious damage to pupils' learning and attitudes from such teaching.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good in a third of lessons, but unsatisfactory overall, with very poor teaching in a significant minority of classes. The skills of literacy and numeracy are not taught effectively, despite pupils' good attitudes to reading. Writing is often very poorly taught, with work left incomplete and unmarked. In a minority of classes where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are well-behaved, but do not learn because work is not matched to their learning needs. The teaching of pupils with statements of special educational need is effectively protected and of good quality, but the needs of other pupils with special educational needs, and of those with English as an additional language, are not met. Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities in music, but otherwise their learning suffers similarly to that of others in their classes. The school's teaching is not meeting the needs of its pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Poor. Some subjects are barely taught, and the range of learning opportunities is too narrow. This contributes to low standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. Provision is good for the small number of pupils with statements of special educational need, but not for others.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. Additional teaching and most work in lessons does not enable these pupils to learn effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good spiritual and moral development, with some very good assemblies. Provision for social development is satisfactory, but undermined by poor teaching in some classes. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, and good for minority ethnic cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good for pupils' health, safety and welfare. Poor guidance on improving their work as progress is not tracked well enough.

The school promotes racial harmony very well. Most parents have a positive view of its work, but a significant minority do not, and partnership with parents is not fully effective. There are some good opportunities for learning outside lessons, including a residential trip and a Gospel Choir, but there is no sport, and no support for homework. The curriculum does not meet legal requirements for geography, design and technology, information and communication technology, and for children up to five.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, but with weaknesses. The headteacher and key staff have sustained the school's climate for learning, but have been unable to ensure that management procedures are followed consistently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have a clear view of the school's values, contribute to key decisions, and manage finance well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The headteacher and governors do not use all of the information available to them to keep track of standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Good use of library resources, but computers in classes were under-used during the inspection.

The school has too few suitably qualified and experienced staff to enable it to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils. In these circumstances, much of the energy of headteacher and acting deputy headteacher has been directed towards preventing education from breaking down. Governors have satisfactory arrangements for obtaining the best value in their financial decisions and other planning, for example by building up funds to appoint a deputy headteacher who does not have responsibility for a class. The new building provides good accommodation for most purposes, but does not enable the school to provide adequately for children up to five. The school has sufficient resources for learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The school expects them to work hard and do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for parents. • Homework. • Teaching in some classes. • Management. • Learning opportunities outside lessons.
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Inspectors shared parents' strong dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching in some classes. They found that parents were not receiving all of the information they should, and that homework was irregular in most classes and unsatisfactory. Given the very high turnover of teachers and pupils in the school, they found that management was succeeding in maintaining the school's key values, but that it had weaknesses. The range of opportunities for learning outside the classroom has suffered from the shortage of permanent teachers, and is more limited than in most schools. Inspectors agreed with the positive points made by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children joining the school in the reception class have reached below average standards, especially in speaking and listening, and social skills. A very significant proportion join the school part-way through their primary education, and these pupils have often reached well below average standards for their age. Nevertheless, standards reached by seven and eleven-year-olds are well below average to very low overall. There was some recovery in test results for eleven-year-olds in 1999, but this was followed by a sharp dip in 2000. Following two years of stable teaching, eleven-year-olds' standards in science during the inspection showed a recovery from the very low standards in 2000 tests, and were below-average. They also showed a marginal improvement in English and mathematics, though they remained well below average overall in these subjects.
2. Pupils throughout the school are achieving much less than they should. Their education is being seriously damaged by the lack of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. For example, one class had 20 temporary teachers in the year preceding the inspection, leaving the teacher who took it over a major recovery task to re-direct the pupils towards purposeful learning. The school has given priority to work in English and mathematics, though it has not been able to ensure consistent teaching even here, and standards throughout the school remain well below average. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening and in literacy are well below average throughout the school. Almost all pupils master the early stages of reading, and develop good attitudes to books, although a small but significant number of seven-year-olds have not begun to read independently. Writing standards are very low in most classes, especially for pupils aged seven to ten. Too much work is copied, and pupils' own writing is often fragmented, unfinished and unmarked. Standards are better in number work than in other aspects of mathematics, but remain well below average overall at seven and eleven. Standards in science are well below average at seven, but show some improvement for pupils aged ten to eleven, and are below average for eleven-year-olds.
3. The high proportion of time given to English and mathematics has seriously limited teaching time for other subjects. Older pupils at the time of the inspection had received almost no teaching in geography and design and technology, and a seriously inadequate programme of work in information and communication technology. Standards in history are broadly average at seven and below average at eleven. There were strong signs of improvement in this subject during the inspection for pupils aged five to seven and those aged ten to eleven, but the work of seven to nine-year olds was poor. Standards in art are broadly average the school. There was too little evidence on which to form a judgement on standards in music and physical education at seven. Eleven-year-olds reach broadly average standards in physical education, and in the aspects of music that were seen during the inspection. There is good singing in assemblies and in the Gospel Choir. A high proportion of eleven-year-olds can swim 25 metres unaided, and many achieve more than this.
4. Children join the school with below average standards in most areas of learning, especially in speaking and listening and social skills. At the time of the inspection, the class for children up to five was achieving satisfactory progress in the areas that were being taught, chiefly communication, language and literacy, number work and social skills. However, they were achieving less than they should because they had too few

opportunities for creative work, for outdoor play, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

5. The two pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress in response to carefully planned provision, including skilled support from teaching assistants. The progress of other pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Many are not identified early enough, and pupils with special educational needs do not receive work matched to their learning needs in most classes. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has taken over the most difficult class in the school, and cannot leave her class to assess the needs of other pupils. In over half of the classes, pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour pose a constant threat to the standards achieved by other pupils, for example by distracting them and by behaving in a way that forces the teacher to give them immediate attention. Pupils with English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress because the teaching they receive is inadequate and not closely focused on their needs.
6. Where pupils receive consistently good teaching, for example in the current class of eleven-year-olds, they begin to make progress from the very low levels they have reached. However, recovery in other classes is hindered by planning that does not take close enough account of the provisions of the National Curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Boys achieve less than girls, not only in national tests at eleven but throughout the school. This has been identified as a priority for provision under the ethnic minority achievement grant, but no impact is being made on the problem, chiefly because additional provision is often deployed in classes that are not being effectively taught. The school sets targets for improvement on the basis of what pupils have already achieved, but the headteacher and governors do not analyse information in sufficient detail to ensure that target setting is reliable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when they were judged to be good.
8. Pupils like coming to school to meet their friends and are stimulated by good teaching. However, many do not sustain good behaviour when the direction from the teacher is weak. Eight-year-olds, for example, asked intelligent questions and designed good posters following a presentation in personal health and social education by the local schools' liaison police officer. By contrast, their attitudes swiftly deteriorated when they were not managed firmly enough in a physical education lesson, and this led to poor learning. Most poor behaviour in lessons stems directly from unsatisfactory or poor teaching.
9. Behaviour outside the classroom, in the hall for lunch and in the playground, is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. Older pupils organise their own team games, whether football or skipping, and play responsibly, recognising that they do not have an exclusive right to the playground. Pupils form good relationships with one another, integrate well, and are comfortable in an environment that is largely free of bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. As at the time of the last inspection, the school excludes very few pupils.
10. Pupils aged ten to eleven begin to show maturity. There is less disruption in lessons, although this is partly the result of better classroom management and higher expectations from teachers. Older pupils are more involved in school activities, for example taking a lead in the recently formed school council, organising charity

fundraising, and preparing a Harvest Tea for the elderly. They take increasing responsibility for the quality of their work, and are effectively prepared for their transfer to secondary school. Children up to five are keen to please and to have their achievements recognised. They show interest in classroom activities.

11. Attendance remains slightly below the national average, but the attendance rate has improved in line with national trends. The large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through their primary education, and unsatisfactory attendance by a very small minority of pupils, have a negative impact on the figures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is satisfactory for children up to five, but ranges in classes for pupils aged five to eleven from good to very poor. Its overall quality is unsatisfactory. At worst, the teaching is so poor that learning stops, and pupils develop negative attitudes that place an unreasonable burden on succeeding teachers. Even after two years of good teaching, for example, eleven-year-olds during the inspection were not reaching the standards their parents were entitled to expect. Analysis of pupils' work shows that much poor learning has been caused by their experience of a succession of temporary teachers, most of whom were no longer in the school at the time of the inspection. During the inspection, there was very poor teaching in one class taught by a temporary teacher, but satisfactory to good teaching in two others. The school had also succeeded, following a period of severe disruption, in stabilising the teaching of pupils aged five to seven. There was a small but significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in lessons taught by the school's permanent teachers, although some of this work showed improvement later in the inspection as a result of action taken by teachers following feedback.
13. The teaching of English during the inspection was satisfactory, with good features, for pupils aged five to seven. Literacy hours are well organised and taught, and pupils learn to enjoy books through regular reading at home and in school, and well-planned visits to the library. The teaching of English and literacy to pupils aged seven to eleven has good features in work with older pupils, but is unsatisfactory overall, and poor in writing. Pupils do not write enough, and the tasks they are given are often of poor quality – in one case, a pupil had copied out the same long poem twice. The use of writing in subjects other than English is very poor, and sometimes pupils' work consists only of isolated words and incomplete exercises. Most marking is ineffective, and work is often left unmarked. Some pupils develop negative attitudes and refuse to write at all. There was, on the other hand, one example during the inspection of a well thought-out approach to writing in history for ten-year-olds, where pupils took notes while watching a video, in preparation for writing a pamphlet on the Romans. This writing consolidated pupils' skills both in history and in independent study. The teaching of number work is satisfactory in just over half of the classes, but there is little application of numeracy skills in other subjects. The overall quality of teaching and learning in numeracy is unsatisfactory, despite a recovery for pupils aged nine to eleven.
14. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory for pupils aged five to seven because too little is expected of them. Teaching is poor for seven-year-olds, but recovers for older pupils, with good teaching for eleven-year-olds. Pupils grow in skill and confidence as a result of this, and standards rise from well below average at seven to below average at eleven. Teaching in history has improved very recently. It is now good for pupils aged nine to eleven, and satisfactory for those aged five to seven. However, learning in history remains fragmented and poor for seven to nine-year-olds, and teaching is sometimes pitched at a level far above what pupils can understand. There is far too little teaching in

geography, design and technology and information and communication technology. Where geography teaching was seen during the inspection, it was of poor quality. The teaching of physical education to pupils aged nine to eleven ranges from satisfactory to good, but weak lesson planning, particularly in the selection of tasks for pupils, leads to unsatisfactory and some poor teaching in physical education for pupils aged five to eight. The teaching of art is satisfactory. It was not possible to observe music teaching for pupils aged five to seven, but a very good lesson for eleven-year-olds enabled them to reach average standards in the aspect of music that was being taught. There is very good teaching of music in extra-curricular clubs, including the Gospel Choir, and pupils are taught to sing well in assemblies.

15. The teaching of pupils under funding for minority ethnic achievement, which is intended to address the needs of boys in particular, is poorly planned and unsatisfactory. The specialist teacher is often deployed in a class that is poorly taught, and does not work consistently with the pupils for whom she is intended. Pupils with English as an additional language receive very little specialist teaching, and most teachers do not have the skills they need to adapt normal lessons to these pupils' needs. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive good teaching from assistants, and are effectively involved in lessons, which helps build their social skills. However, those without statements do not receive teaching that is effectively matched to their learning difficulties, and their learning and longer-term progress are unsatisfactory.
16. Where the teaching is good or better, teachers combine very clear knowledge and understanding of their subject with good skills in managing pupils, so that even those who have developed negative attitudes work at a reasonable pace. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers' planning enables pupils to make reasonable progress, but is not finely tuned to the range of learning needs in the class. Learning in these lessons is sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour, but the problem is satisfactorily contained. The satisfactory teaching for children up to five ensures consistent learning in the aspects of the curriculum for these children that are being covered, with a good contribution from the nursery nurse. However, as planning does not take into account the full range of activities recommended for pupils of this age, particularly in creative work and play, their learning is unsatisfactory overall.
17. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the tasks given to pupils are not matched to their learning needs, leaving some without a clear idea of what they need to do. In most, though not all, of these lessons, teachers also have limited skills in managing pupils' poor behaviour. Where the teaching is poor or very poor, tasks given to pupils are not appropriate, teachers do not know the subject in sufficient detail, and learning breaks down amid very poor behaviour. Although these lessons are few in number, enough pupils experience them at some time in their education for them to cause serious damage. While some teachers set homework regularly and mark pupils' books thoroughly, there are serious gaps in these areas across the school.
18. Teachers during the inspection often showed resilience and determination to ensure that pupils learned as well as they could, for example by insisting that a class that had behaved poorly during physical education settled and completed a spelling test properly at the end of the afternoon. However, the inconsistencies in teaching and learning, and the substantial proportion that is unsatisfactory or worse, prevent it from meeting the diverse learning needs of the pupils. Concerns expressed to the inspection team by parents and pupils before and during the inspection were fully borne out by inspection evidence. Teaching has worsened since the last inspection, and this is the main reason why the school is not providing a satisfactory education for its pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

19. The school's severe difficulties with staffing have resulted in a decline in the range and quality of learning opportunities it was providing at the time of the last inspection. The quality of the curriculum is now poor. Although the school has concentrated on introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, it has not succeeded in ensuring that they are effectively taught in a third of classes. As a result, teachers spend too much of their time in trying, often without success, to compensate for serious gaps in learning from previous years. This is rarely possible. While provision for science meets legal requirements, the National Curriculum is not covered as well as it needs to be, particularly for six and seven-year-olds.
20. Provision for information and communication technology, design and technology and geography is poor throughout the school. The last two subjects are hardly taught at all, and provision for all three does not meet statutory requirements. The school has now purchased a modern computer suite, and has made suitable arrangements for training teachers to use it. However, at the time of the inspection, the new computers were not yet operating. Discussions with eleven-year-olds showed that they had had very few opportunities to learn about and use computers during their time at the school.
21. Teachers' planning takes account of different levels of ability and learning needs in most classes, but this is not always effective. Most do not refer closely enough to the full range of National Curriculum programmes of study and level descriptions, especially in planning work for higher-attaining pupils, and do not make sufficient adjustments to provide for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The curriculum for all pupils improves significantly as they move towards secondary school, but interruptions to learning in earlier years leave teachers of pupils aged ten to eleven with too little on which to build.
22. Personal, social and health education is satisfactory, and the school receives good support from outside agencies, such as the community police, in advising the pupils on all aspects of safety. The use and abuse of drugs is effectively covered in class lessons for the older pupils. The school makes very good provision for swimming, and a high proportion of pupils reach or exceed the nationally expected standard at eleven.
23. Learning opportunities outside the classroom have suffered from the school's staffing problems. A large number of pupils enjoy the newly-formed Gospel choir. There is a musical workshop theatre and a Good News club. Sport activities, however, do not feature at present, and a planned homework club is not yet in place. The school has built up a very good relationship with the local public library. Pupils borrow and return books regularly, and a librarian led a very enjoyable story session for seven-year-olds during the inspection. There have been some good educational visits over the year, such as those to the Millenium Dome, Legoland and the British Museum. However, the school has not been able to keep to its planned programme of one visit for each class each term. There is also a school five-day trip to Arethusa Venture Centre, where the pupils participate in many outdoor activities.
24. Relationships with the community and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning are satisfactory, with some good features. There is an annual graduation ceremony, using special gowns sponsored by organisations within the community. The local community provides some positive support for the school, most of it through the local Parish Church and the Friends of St Mary Magdalene. The church is used for festivals and celebrations and a representative regularly takes collective worship at the

school. A member of the Peckham Christian Centre also leads the Good News club at the school. The Friends help with social events such as the International Evening and the Christmas fair.

25. The school has a good relationship with nurseries and with a local secondary school, which includes access to its swimming pool. The school has made good use of the governors' specialised knowledge of computers in designing its new suite, and uses the external services of the local education authority to develop teachers' skills where these are weak. However, these services are unable to have lasting effect on learning because of the very high turnover of teachers.
26. The school makes good arrangements for spiritual development in the context of its Christian ethos. Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on their place in the world and to develop a sense of responsibility towards others. Hymn singing and prayer are imbued with a genuine sense of spirituality, which is reinforced for many pupils by participation in the Gospel Choir. Prayers composed by pupils in lessons contain a strong sense of personal commitment and are among the best writing in the school. The spirit of reflection is deeply embedded in the school, as exemplified by a pupil's prayer, 'Let me understand that people may not understand me'.
27. The school gives its pupils a strong moral lead, in the context of its Christian ethos. Its behaviour policy is clear and pupils sign a behaviour agreement each year. This policy deals very effectively with any incidents of oppressive behaviour, checking any potential racial problems at a very early stage. It does not, however, ensure that pupils behave as they should in all lessons, particularly when the teaching is unsatisfactory or poor. There are very good arrangements to reward and promote good behaviour, for example through the 'Child of the Week' in assembly, and parents are involved at an early stage if pupils begin to misbehave. The headteacher provides constant support for pupils' moral development, and all the staff, including those whose work is less effective, set pupils an example of kindness, good manners and consideration for others. Because of the inconsistencies in teaching and learning and the high turnover of pupils a great deal of time is spent by the school's most effective teachers in establishing and reinforcing the moral values of the school, and in providing personal guidance to pupils.
28. Provision for social development is satisfactory. It is closely allied to moral development, but suffers more severely from the inconsistencies in what is expected from one class to another. For example, in one class, the teacher repeatedly pointed out that pupils were treating him disrespectfully, but was unable to bring about any improvement in the situation. The school does all it can to raise pupils' sights and to give them a sense that they can achieve. The good attitudes of pupils about to move on to secondary school indicate its longer-term success in this, and there was a clear sense of pride in photographs of pupils taking part in last year's graduation ceremony. Older pupils considered that they had made a lot of friends at school, and were beginning to contribute to the school community. For example, they had been consulted over the problems in the old building and the move to the new one, and a school council had recently been formed.
29. Pupils receive a good introduction to Black culture, through the music and art they study and through topics in history, which emphasise international Black achievement. They receive some good information on other aspects of British culture, for example in their interviews with older people about their experience of the Second World War, and their art work includes study of the work of a range of European artists, such as Picasso. Cultural development is also promoted through visits. Overall, provision for cultural development is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school continues to provide the caring environment that was noted in the last inspection report. However, its arrangements to assess and track pupils' learning and progress are not used consistently and are having little effect on standards. Procedures for child protection, which follow the guidelines produced by the local authority, are good: staff are clear about their responsibilities. The school successfully promotes the health, safety and well-being of all its pupils through the curriculum, by working with parents, and by drawing on the expertise of relevant support agencies.
31. Pupils work in a safe environment, which is regularly monitored. There have, however, been several injuries to fingers from the heavy doors in the new building. Most support staff who come into direct contact with pupils have many years of experience, and provide an anchor of stability. Some excellent support was seen in the dining hall, where a combination of coaxing and understanding successfully encouraged young pupils to eat and enjoy a balanced meal. In the playground, adults show an interest in what pupils are doing and in what they have to say. Even so, this close personal support does not fully make up for the effect of the high turnover of staff, which means that teachers do not always have time to get to know their pupils well and to gain their confidence.
32. The improvement in attendance since the last inspection is due to the school's effective arrangements for monitoring and encouraging good attendance, sometimes against a backdrop of instability in pupils' lives outside school.
33. There is a straightforward behaviour policy with a range of rewards and sanctions that support good behaviour. These are effective in promoting a generally friendly environment, free of oppressive behaviour. The school records all incidents of oppressive behaviour, including racist comments, and works directly with parents and others to promote tolerance and understanding. These arrangements are not, however, enough to ensure acceptable behaviour in classes where teaching is weak. Pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour are not always identified before their problem has become entrenched.
34. The school has developed arrangements to assess and track pupils' work in English and mathematics, but these are not used in most classes to plan work and guide pupils' learning. There is very little use of assessment in other subjects and, with some exceptions, marking is not contributing to assessment. The school's problems in ensuring consistency in the context of its very high turnover of staff have been very great, but the impact of assessment on teaching and learning is poor. There has been little change in this situation since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. At the time of the last inspection, the school did not have a satisfactory relationship with parents. Since that time, the school has made some improvement to its provision, but its relationship with a significant minority of parents remains troubled, chiefly because of their concern over staffing. Many at the pre-inspection meeting complained vociferously about the high turnover of staff, including a succession of supply teachers in some classes, and the negative effect this was having on their children's learning. These concerns are fully borne out by the inspection evidence.
36. On the other hand, nine-tenths of parents responding to the pre-inspection

questionnaire agreed that their children liked school, and this was confirmed in conversations that inspectors held with pupils. Parents thought that the school had high expectations of achievement, but this was found to depend on the quality of teaching available in each class. A significant proportion of parents thought that there were too few out-of-school activities. Inspectors agreed that the range of activities, which does not include sport or support for homework, was narrower than in most schools, despite some good features. One-third of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school did not communicate well with them, although many at the meeting said that they had good access to teachers.

37. Communications with home are reasonably frequent and keep parents informed about what is going on in school. Where major problems arise, such as high teacher turnover in a particular class, parents are invited to meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns. Home visits are arranged for all children up to five joining the school and satisfactory initial guidance is given to parents about teaching and learning, particularly in reading. There is, however, too little continuous information about the curriculum for each class in the school to enable parents to be fully involved in their children's education at home, apart from the good liaison which is maintained on home reading. An initiative to encourage African and African-Caribbean fathers to become more involved has recently been launched, but the response has been slow. Other support links available to parents include advice on parenting skills from a local Family Centre.
38. Pupils' annual reports are of satisfactory quality and contain advice for improvement for older pupils. Formal publications such as the school prospectus and the governors' annual report do not fully inform parents, particularly on financial matters, and do not comply with the law. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational need are properly involved with the reviews of their children's individual education plans, if they choose to be. Other parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed once their child has been identified, but the school is often slow to do this. Some parents' concerns about this were borne out by the inspection evidence.
39. All parents sign the home/school agreement and are made aware of the behaviour policy. They know that absence will be followed up and that they will be involved when the behaviour of their child or children causes concern. This has helped reduce absence. Specific problems raised by parents are investigated thoroughly, often with the assistance of outside agencies. Most parents subscribe to the school capitation fund, which is used to help fund external building maintenance. The Friends of St Mary Magdalene raise funds for the school and help with social events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school have sustained the key values and sense of direction of the school, so that pupils moving on to secondary school have generally good attitudes to education. It has successfully negotiated and carried out the construction and move to a new building, which has improved learning opportunities for pupils. On the other hand, management has not ensured that procedures for tracking standards and progress throughout the school are used consistently, or that each class has a balanced timetable. Despite the great difficulties facing the school, these are significant weaknesses.
41. The headteacher continues to provide the strong personal leadership noted in the last inspection report. She ensures that the school is committed to high standards, and sustains an ethos for learning that is effectively communicated to all of the pupils, including those with statements of special educational need, through all of the school's

centrally-organised activities, for example assemblies. The governors have improved their organisation and planning since the last inspection, and contribute satisfactorily to major decisions affecting the school. These have included the move to the new building and the allocation of funds to recruit a deputy headteacher who is not based in a class, in order to strengthen senior management and improve the level of support available to teachers. The governors review standards regularly, using the results of national tests to help in setting targets, but do not use the full range of information available to them, particularly the autumn package which is sent to all schools, in doing this. As a result, while they know that standards are lower than they should be, and that targets are not met, they are not fully aware of the extent of the school's problems, for example in standards in mathematics for seven-year-olds. The governors do not monitor the progress of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs.

42. The school development plan covers the main issues facing the school and has suitable priorities, although not all have clear indicators of success. The governors and headteacher manage the school's budget carefully and effectively, and allocate funds to education priorities, including the move to the new building and the modernisation of the school's computers. Governors' specialised skills are used effectively for the benefit of the school. The senior management team is balanced and provides satisfactory day-to-day management, but has weaknesses in planning for longer-term issues, such as the balance of the curriculum and the deployment of the teacher employed for two days per week to raise the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. As a result, this teacher is not used effectively, and learning opportunities in three subjects of the National Curriculum do not meet legal requirements. During the inspection, recently revised provision for history, was leading to improvements in teaching and learning in two thirds of the classes, though it was not effective in classes where the overall standard of teaching was unsatisfactory.
43. Teaching is regularly monitored and action is taken to improve it where necessary, including the use of competence procedures. There are suitable arrangements for staff development and training, including satisfactory support for newly-qualified teachers. The school is making satisfactory progress towards the full introduction of performance management, and threshold assessment has taken place. The school is taking all reasonable steps to recruit new teachers, including interviewing candidates from Australia by telephone. However, these arrangements are not sufficient to ensure satisfactory teaching in all classes, and during the inspection the school was forced to choose between supporting temporary teachers whose work it knew to be unsatisfactory or poor, and having the headteacher take the class personally, leaving her unable to support teachers or manage the school. Neither option provided the school's management with the means of ensuring satisfactory education for all of the pupils.
44. The school has too few suitably qualified and experienced teachers either to teach the National Curriculum or to co-ordinate work in subjects other than English and mathematics. At the time of the inspection, there was no co-ordinator for science, and the co-ordinator for special educational needs had too few opportunities to carry out her work because of the pressure on her from a very difficult class. This had prevented pupils with special educational needs from being identified in good time for the school to begin to address their needs. Co-ordination for English and mathematics was not fully effective at the time of the inspection, as co-ordinators had been unable to establish consistent approaches because of the turnover of staff. Among other subjects, only art was co-ordinated effectively. There is no co-ordination of work for children up to five. All of these issues have a long-term impact on learning and standards.

45. The library is well stocked with books, and the school now has good resources for information and communication technology, though these were not yet working at the time of the inspection. Overall, it has sufficient resources for learning. Accommodation is adequate for the school to teach the National Curriculum and is kept in very good condition by the caretaker and his staff. However, it does not include sufficient arrangements and resources for children up to five to play outdoors, and therefore does not allow the school to provide the full recommended curriculum for these pupils. Recent improvements to organisation and staffing have improved the efficiency of the office, though the governors need to make better use of computers in preparing their annual report to parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The headteacher and governors should take the following steps to improve the quality of education. However, improvement depends above all on the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified teachers. The school is taking all reasonable steps to achieve this.

- (1) Improve the quality of management and leadership, by:

- extending the monitoring of teaching to include marking, writing and homework;
- ensuring that each class has a balanced timetable;
- improving the management of provision for special educational needs and for English as an additional language;
- establishing effective systems for co-ordinating work in each subject, and for managing the work of co-ordinators;
- ensuring that the school uses all relevant data in monitoring its work.
(Paragraphs 3, 15, 17-18, 19-21, 40-44, 57, 59, 64, 68, 70, 72, 78)

- (2) Raise standards, by:

- ensuring that writing tasks in each subject contribute to learning;
- ensuring that pupils complete all work, and present it to a good standard;
- improving the teaching of reading and writing to the lowest-attaining pupils.
(Paragraphs 1-6, 13, 57, 60, 61, 63, 68, 72)

- (3) Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:

- using the National Curriculum to match work to pupils' learning needs in all subjects;
- ensuring that marking and homework take place regularly and contribute to learning;
- improving the quality of additional teaching for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds;
- improving the use of computers and other technology to support learning.
(Paragraphs 2, 5-6, 12-15, 17, 36, 40, 63, 65, 70, 71, 75, 77, 93-4)

- (4) Extend and improve the range of learning opportunities, by:

- ensuring that the programme of study for each subject is provided to the standard required by law;
- ensuring that teachers have the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to teach the full curriculum;

- providing the full range of learning opportunities set out in the Foundation Curriculum for children up to five, including opportunities for outdoor play. (Paragraphs 3-4, 14, 19-21, 40, 42, 44-5, 48-9, 53-6, 70, 75, 84-7, 93-4)
- (5) Develop effective systems for assessing and tracking learning and progress, by:
- ensuring that systems already in place, including the evaluation sections of planning sheets, are used consistently and monitored;
 - using the National Curriculum as a reference point for standards in all subjects;
 - improving arrangements to identify, assess and monitor the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and of those with English as an additional language. (Paragraphs 5-6, 14-15, 21, 30, 34, 40-42, 57, 69, 73)

(6) Improve behaviour, by:

- ensuring that teachers use the school's behaviour policy consistently;
- ensuring that pupils have work in all lessons that engages their interest and sustains their attention;
- identifying special educational needs related to behaviour an earlier stage.
(Paragraphs 6, 12-13, 17, 27-8, 33, 41, 75, 99, 101)

Minor issues for action

- Ensure that information the school and governors provide for parents meets all statutory requirements.
(Paragraphs 38, 45)
- Minimise the risk of injury to staff and pupils from fire doors.
(Paragraph 84)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	30	38	17	8	2

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	200
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	16	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	11	12	14
	Total	23	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (57)	83 (71)	93 (68)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	13	13
	Girls	12	14	12
	Total	22	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (71)	90 (79)	83 (64)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	13	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	10	7	10
	Total	15	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (73)	41 (58)	52 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	5	5
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (62)	52 (54)	52 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	91
Black – African heritage	62
Black – other	10
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	36
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	184

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	575,455
Total expenditure	622,934
Expenditure per pupil	3,211
Balance brought forward from previous year	72,659
Balance carried forward to next year	25,180

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	42	0	9	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	39	12	6	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	36	12	15	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	42	27	15	3
The teaching is good.	18	58	3	6	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	33	33	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	36	12	6	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	52	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	18	45	27	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	21	33	36	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21	61	9	6	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	18	30	30	6

Other points raised by parents

A significant number of parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in discussions with inspectors expressed strong dissatisfaction with the school's high turnover of temporary teachers, and with the quality of some of their work.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. There are 30 children aged four and five, taught in the reception class. Good organisation and partnership with the parents, including home visits to all new parents, ensure that children settle into their new school well. Nearly all the children begin with below average levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their age. Their skills in communication, language and literacy in English are low, and their personal, social and emotional development is immature.
48. The quality of teaching and learning during the inspection was satisfactory, with good features. However, the school does not take full account of the revised national guidelines for children up to five, and the children do not make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning which these guidelines contain. Progress has also been harmed by a high turnover of teachers in the class since the beginning of the year. There are significant shortages of key resources, and the school has been built without the necessary facilities for children to play outdoors. There is no large outdoor play equipment and there are no wheeled vehicles. By the time they start work in the National Curriculum, only the highest-attaining children reach the standards expected for their age. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory, as these children are not identified early enough to enable the school to provide targeted support. The overall quality of provision for children up to five has declined significantly since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

49. Children's progress in this area is satisfactory, within the limits of the structured activities. However, they are seldom given the opportunity to be involved in free play. When they enter the school, many children have poor social skills. Many do not know how to become actively involved in learning, and have difficulty in following routines and rules for working and playing together. However, good attention to their specific needs and sensitive encouragement within a secure and friendly environment help children to settle in quickly and to organise themselves in activities they choose themselves. They are encouraged to say 'Please' and 'Thank you'. Social skills are developed through role play in the home corner, at present 'a housing office'. For example, children work as part of a group, take turns and share fairly. They are then able to transfer these skills to their behaviour at lunch-time. Children are taught to wear aprons and roll up their sleeves to their elbows when painting or sticking with glue. They are helped to understand the impact of their actions, and to curb their natural excitement when introduced to new tasks. However, many still find this difficult, and lack the initiative seen in most children of a similar age. By the time they start work on the National Curriculum, standards in their personal and social skills are below average for their age. In particular, except for a small number of higher-attaining children, their capacity to take the initiative and begin to take full responsibility for their tasks remains low.

Communication, language and literacy

50. Provision for children's communication, language and literacy skills leads to satisfactory learning. Satisfactory teaching promotes English language skills in all activities, such as talking about the different parts of a fish, or describing how to draw round a template of animal shapes. The teacher, with good support from the nursery nurse, teaches the

basic skills of literacy soundly. The nursery nurse hears the children read regularly and keeps satisfactory records. There is good involvement of the parents, and children take their books home every day to share their reading. In group work and in whole class lessons, good thought is given to promoting correct habits in speaking and listening. Talk is always encouraged, with an understanding of how to increase children's range of vocabulary. All adults give good support in this work.

51. Careful thought has been given to promoting children's enjoyment of stories and imaginative ideas. Children are encouraged to enjoy stories although there are few opportunities for imaginative role play. Progress is satisfactory, although only the higher-attaining children reach the standard expected in national guidelines. All children attempt to form their letters correctly, write their names and copy what their teachers write for them. By the time they leave the reception class, very few can write sentences. Few children have a secure knowledge of sounds other than the initial letter in a word, and so only a small minority can sound words out. However, almost all reception children respond well to stories, recognise that text has meaning, 'tell' the story using picture cues and read a few common words. They listen more attentively and talk more confidently than when they join the school, although their range and use of vocabulary is below average.

Mathematical development

52. The teaching of mathematical language and skills is satisfactory. Most children entering the school have a limited understanding of number and mathematical concepts. The attention given to developing mathematical vocabulary helps children make satisfactory progress in this aspect. Children make satisfactory progress in recognising and ordering numbers, grouping objects, such as coins, into sets, accurately identifying shapes and developing early measuring skills when they compare size and quantity.
53. However, the planned activities do not always give the children enough practical, 'hands-on' experience, and there is too much pencil and paper work. Children, particularly those with English as an additional language, do not have enough opportunities to experiment with number. Only the highest-attaining children develop the skills expected nationally in working with number at a more abstract level. Some children cannot write their numbers accurately. By the time children begin work on the National Curriculum, standards are below those expected for children of their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. The quality of teaching and the provision for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them is unsatisfactory. As there are too few resources, such as sand, water and playdough, opportunities for the children to investigate objects and materials by using all their senses are restricted. Scientific learning is limited. However, the children do build and construct church buildings with lego, and cut and paste tissue paper to give a 'stained glass' window effect. They manipulate the computer mouse in a graphics program to draw picture patterns, although their understanding of technology is very limited as they do not use tapes or other programmable toys to support their learning. By the time they start work on the National Curriculum, standards are well below average.

Physical development

55. When they enter the school, children's physical skills are below average, particularly in fine movements. These skills improve through the handling of objects such as puzzles,

and the use of pencils, crayons, and other resources for art and craft activities. By the time children leave the reception class, most have developed the expected skills in cutting, sticking and shaping materials. Few opportunities, however, are provided for children to develop co-ordination through activities such as the use of balls to improve their throwing and catching skills. The lack of an outdoor space, outdoor climbing equipment and wheeled vehicles limits the learning, and progress overall is unsatisfactory. Children have limited freedom to make large-scale movements and to develop their climbing and balancing skills. Overall, physical development is below average, and the school has made too little progress in this area since the last inspection.

Creative development

56. Children make unsatisfactory progress overall. When they join the school, only a few can draw more than simple lines on a page. They quickly learn to draw patterns, animals and people and, by the time they move on to the National Curriculum, most can express themselves effectively with different media and techniques. For example, they enthusiastically paint the egg carton scales of a crocodile and add a tail and feet. The activities provided for role play are limited, and there are few dressing-up clothes. There was limited evidence of music, dance and drama; in consequence, children have too few opportunities to develop their imagination and creative expression.

ENGLISH

57. Results in national tests at seven and eleven are well below average overall, though they fluctuate somewhat from year to year. At seven, the boys' and girls' results are similar, but eleven-year-old girls achieve much higher standards than the boys in their class. Despite good learning in some classes, standards are significantly lower than at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, with the exception of the small number with statements of special educational need, are achieving much less than they should. Pupils with English as an additional language are learning little in most lessons and their progress is unsatisfactory.
58. Standards in speaking and listening among pupils joining the school range from well above average to well below average. Overall, they are below average. This gives rise to a complex pattern of learning needs in each class, and those teachers who respond successfully to these needs provide carefully targeted opportunities for speaking and listening. For example, a group of lower-attaining six-year-olds learnt that the 'leaves' they saw were seaweed, whilst higher-attaining seven-year-olds could tell that chillies were one member of the pepper family. Ten-year-olds in a successful lesson used a range of specialised vocabulary, including the terms personification, metaphor, rhyming couplets and stanza, to describe poems. However, such opportunities are not provided consistently enough to enable pupils to sustain average rates of progress, and questions from pupils in a very successful history class for eleven-year-olds showed limited vocabulary and structure for their age. Pupils aged five to seven develop their listening skills soundly in carefully managed classrooms, as do all pupils aged ten and eleven, who show respect for and appreciation of each other's efforts. For example, after listening in silence to a fellow pupil reading 'From a Railway Carriage', the class of ten-year-olds gave controlled and deserved applause. In successful lessons, teachers always maintain a strict control over the speaking. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory or worse, pupils speak out of turn and do not listen to their teacher. When this occurs, learning no longer takes place.
59. A substantial minority of pupils read appropriate texts for their age at seven and eleven,

but the majority read at a lower level. Standards are low. Higher-attaining seven-year-olds can read simple stories with expression and retell the plot. However, only a small number, even among higher-attaining pupils, use the full range of strategies for reading that has been introduced in the National Literacy Strategy. There is very limited support for lower-attaining pupils, some of whom do not know the difference between letters and words. Lower-attaining pupils aged eight follow the Additional Literacy Programme, but staffing difficulties have meant that this has ceased for nine year-olds. By eleven, higher-attaining pupils develop a critical appreciation of poetry, reading with fluency and accuracy books such as 'The Wind in the Willows'. Daily guided reading sessions have been introduced very recently to increase reading opportunities. These are effective, and lower-attaining eleven-year-olds confidently read the poem, 'Ten Dancing Dinosaurs'.

60. All pupils enjoy the school's very wide range of books, many selected specifically for boys or with a multicultural theme, which are displayed in attractive book corners in each room and in the new library. Six and seven-year-olds visit the public library with their teacher and several other adults, and this helps improve their library skills and interest in reading. A love of books is fostered by successful annual book weeks, when visiting storytellers, such as the poet Valerie Bloom, come to the school. Most pupils have book bags and participate in the home-school reading agreement; all older pupils who discussed books with inspectors said that they enjoyed reading. However, although there are class reading records, assessment of progress throughout the whole school has been limited by the staff turnover and the lack of a rigorous monitoring system; one is to be introduced next year.
61. The highest-attaining seven-year-olds can list key facts about authors from the covers of books, using capital letters, full stops and joined writing accurately. This work reaches the standard expected nationally. A small number of higher-attaining eleven-year-old pupils also meet the standards expected for their age, for example in well-argued letters of complaint about the dangers to dolphins from tuna fishing. Most eleven-year-olds, however, write to a very low standard for their age, with serious weaknesses in grammatical accuracy and in spelling. Standards of handwriting and presentation vary greatly throughout the school. In most lessons for six and seven-year-olds, letters are correctly formed by all pupils, who develop a good printing style. Higher-attaining pupils have joined handwriting. However, the presentation of much of the work of eight to ten-year-olds is very poor. Most still print in either pen or pencil in various sizes, and careful presentation is reserved for best work on display boards. Much work is skimmed and left unfinished and unmarked. There is little evidence of eight, nine and ten-year-olds writing a sustained story or prose, and most are making little or no long-term progress. There is some very recent evidence of well thought-out writing tasks for ten-year-olds in history, but this had not had time to bring about an improvement in standards. The work of eleven-year-olds is well-presented, but pupils are not consistently using joined handwriting.
62. Teaching during the inspection was good in half of the lessons, and satisfactory in a third. In the remaining lessons its quality ranged from unsatisfactory to poor, and there was substantial further evidence of poor teaching in pupils' work over the year. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned, prepared and paced. Teachers have good knowledge of the National Curriculum and of the National Literacy Strategy, and make good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding and move it forward. In a class of ten-year-olds, for example, the teacher changed her lesson when pupils did not understand the term 'metaphor', and after a knowledgeable explanation the lesson continued successfully. In the best teaching, teachers are aware of the different abilities of pupils, set work accordingly and use teaching assistants effectively to help pupils to

learn. Teachers provide a balanced programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing, and pupils sustain a high level of concentration, working willingly to complete their tasks.

63. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or worse, planning is inadequate, work lacks a balance of challenge and support, and pupils are poorly managed. In one lesson, higher-attaining nine-year-olds completed their work so quickly and effortlessly that they soon became restless. Pupils' work is usually marked, but the quality of marking ranges from good to poor; most pupils do not make use of the teachers' suggestions for improvement, and teachers' comments reflected pupils' targets in only two out of seven classes. Homework is a regular feature in some classes, but in others it is rarely set. This is unsatisfactory. Only a small proportion of work in subjects other than English contributes to standards in literacy. Most is of very poor quality, often copied or unfinished, and rarely marked. This is a major weakness in the school's teaching. Throughout the school, there is little use of computers to support English teaching.
64. The co-ordinator is acting deputy headteacher, and has taken over the most difficult class in the school. She is unable to leave this class to monitor English teaching. She has led training regularly, but has not been able to ensure that the school's policies for English, including arrangements for tracking progress, are used consistently.

MATHEMATICS

65. Results in national tests and teachers' assessments for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were very low, and well below average in comparison with those of similar schools. Standards in national tests for seven-year-olds were well below average, but the school's performance was close to the average for similar schools. Standards in mathematics at the time of the last inspection were very low, and there has been little change. This is mainly because of the high turnover of staff and pupils in recent years. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are achieving less well than they should. Standards and achievement are lower than they should be, despite improvements in learning among the oldest pupils.
66. Among the seven-year-olds, only a few of the high-attaining pupils can count and manipulate numbers to a hundred in mental mathematics, such as counting on and back in tens from zero and calculating multiples of ten. The majority of the pupils work with numbers up to 20 or 30. Most can identify and describe common shapes, but as yet are unaware of mathematical terms such as corners, edges and faces. They have not yet developed a sound knowledge of the two and five times multiplication tables. They use standard and non-standard methods of measurement, and are aware of lines of symmetry. In a recent survey of bed-times, pupils were introduced to the use of bar graphs to record their investigations. However, their poor knowledge and understanding of mathematical language and reasoning limit their understanding of problems and their ability to solve them.
67. By the age of eleven, only higher-attaining pupils can use a variety of mental and written methods for calculating numbers up to 1000 or more. Most experience difficulties in adding and subtracting decimals competently and comparing equivalent fractions. A few higher-attaining seven and eight-year-olds use place value up to 1000 accurately, but many of these pupils have still to reach the standard expected nationally at seven. Eight and nine-year-olds are beginning to solve money problems and are able to decide which is the best mathematical operation to use. Ten-year-olds develop confidence in dealing with money problems as their language skills improve, and are able to work out the cost of sale goods, for example by deducting ten per cent of the price. The oldest

pupils in the school examine probability and prediction and undertake simple mathematical investigations with improving confidence.

68. While the quality of teaching in most lessons during the inspection was satisfactory or better, evidence from pupils' work during the year showed much poor and some very poor work, mainly due to the turnover of temporary teachers who have been unable to follow the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching in one class had been greatly improved immediately prior to the inspection by the appointment of a new temporary teacher, and the headteacher took over the teaching of another during the inspection. In another class, the quality of teaching improved during the inspection following feedback to the teacher.
69. The grouping of pupils according to their learning needs helps promote learning. However, it is not fully effective because procedures for tracking standards in mathematics are not used consistently, leading teachers to set work which is not matched to pupils' needs and abilities. There is inadequate support in some classes for lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. However, particularly in the older classes, pupils have good attitudes to their work, and this contributes to the quality of learning. Numeracy lessons pay sufficient attention to developing pupils' skills in mental mathematics, but they have few opportunities to use these skills in other subjects. The overall quality of learning in mathematics is unsatisfactory.
70. Where the teaching is satisfactory or better, teachers have clear understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and use this to plan a sound range of activities. All lessons start with mental or oral work. This is usually successful because questioning is brisk and matches the needs of all the pupils. Planning is appropriate, and teachers generally ensure that pupils of all abilities work at appropriate tasks. Learning objectives are clear, and in most lessons they are shared with pupils so that they understand what is expected. The management of pupils is good and contributes to the good behaviour seen in some lessons. When teaching is effective, there is good pace, skilful questioning and management with challenging activities planned. However, the benefit of much of the effective teaching is lost through the incidence of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in some classes. The school's planning format provides for the evaluation of lessons and assessment of pupils to help teachers plan the next lesson, but this process is not used in some classes. With the exception of the oldest pupils, pupils present work poorly, and teachers accept this. Much work is unmarked, so pupils and teachers do not know what has and has not been understood. The emphasis of the work is on skills in numeracy, to the extent that other areas of learning are incomplete and there are few opportunities for practical mathematics. Homework is not used consistently and does not always reinforce the work covered in the lesson.
71. Planning for the mathematics curriculum has shown some improvement since the last inspection, but this is not reflected in the work in classes. Arrangements for assessment have been organised, but at present are being used consistently only by the co-ordinator. Resources are good, but not sufficiently well used in lessons. Little use is made of information and communication technology in mathematics. The co-ordinator has good understanding of the subject, but has had no opportunity to make an impact in classes where the overall quality of teaching has been poor.

SCIENCE

72. Teachers' assessments in science for seven-year-olds in 2000 were below the standards expected nationally and also below the standards in similar schools. By the

time of the inspection, these pupils were reaching well below average standards for their age, with much very poor and unfinished work in their books. This was chiefly, though not solely, due to serious interruptions to these pupils' learning in the year prior to the inspection. Standards in national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were very low, but there was some recovery by the time of the inspection, when eleven-year-olds were reaching below average standards. Nevertheless, these pupils had not made up all of the ground that they had lost, and the level of achievement in science is lower than it should be. Standards and progress in science were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, and have declined significantly.

73. The learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory, because in most lessons teachers plan the same work for all pupils in the class. With rare exceptions, where the teacher is obliged to give most of her attention to pupils with special educational needs, so that the learning of other pupils suffers, there is no specific support for lower-attaining pupils. Analysis of work also shows that these pupils make little or no progress in most lessons. However, there is better progress among older pupils, and the learning of eleven-year-olds is satisfactory. Gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress, as the work set is not sufficiently challenging for them.
74. The teaching and learning of the younger pupils are unsatisfactory. Pupils aged between five and seven do not have sufficient learning opportunities to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Higher-attaining pupils could make good predictions and conclusions and recorded their work clearly. However, they were not sufficiently challenged to extend their thinking in lessons. The presentation of work is untidy, and there is little drawn or written work by lower-attaining pupils. Teaching aims in the class for seven-year-olds were adjusted to take account of pupils' previously very limited experience of science; however, this was carried too far, and work was not matched to the learning needs of pupils capable of reaching average or higher standards.
75. The teaching and learning of pupils aged seven to eleven were satisfactory or better in three quarters of lessons, and good for the oldest pupils. However, the teaching of the youngest pupils in this age range during the inspection was poor, and the work in their books over the year very poor, with much fragmented and incomplete writing, some of which was barely started. In a lesson on how sound travels, a very few pupils did manage to make some progress, but the overall quality of teaching and learning was poor, and relationships broke down.
76. Nine and ten-year-olds make satisfactory progress. In considering the human life cycle, pupils showed that they understood the needs of people at each level and recorded them satisfactorily. The older pupils' attitude to science is positive. When measuring pulse rates the pupils worked conscientiously and sensibly together and recorded their results well in carefully drawn line graphs. Eleven-year-olds show a mature approach in tackling problems; for example, they made very positive suggestions when considering how to change the power of electromagnets. The teacher's subsequent good questioning increased the depth of their learning. The pupils then compared the results of all their experiments and drew satisfactory conclusions.
77. In the small proportion of lessons in which teaching is good, it is planned well, with clear learning aims, and challenges pupils to think and question their own thinking. The teacher expects higher-attaining pupils to draw everyone's conclusions together, and to compare the effectiveness of each one. The strengths of the satisfactory teaching lay in the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and their determination for pupils to understand the ideas being taught. Weaknesses in these lessons lay, in one

case, in controlling the pupils and, in the other, in a repetitive style that delayed pupils in their investigations. Where the teaching is poor, practical work does not take sufficient account of the learning needs of the pupils, the class is poorly managed, and pupils begin to develop negative attitudes to school which place further demands on teachers taking over their classes in subsequent years. The repetition of this pattern over a long period of time, as shown in pupils' books, results in very poor learning.

78. The school has good resources for science and a satisfactory new draft policy. Nevertheless, there is no co-ordinator and the management of science is unsatisfactory because of its very limited impact on teaching. There is some monitoring of planning and lessons, but this does not extend to pupils' written work. There was no evidence during the inspection of the use of computers in teaching science.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Pupils reach the standards expected for their age at seven and eleven. There are no significant differences in the achievements of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. At the time of the last inspection, eleven-year-olds achieved above-average standards. However, progress and learning remain satisfactory.
80. Seven-year-olds can mix primary colour paints to achieve different shades of colour. They can adapt their work to imitate the style of artists they have studied, and have the manual dexterity to produce an Easter garden collage using a variety of techniques. Six-year-olds work with a wide variety of media including chalk, pastel and charcoal for sketching. Higher-attaining pupils of this age can fold and then cut patterns out of strips of paper to achieve a balanced decoration for a medieval shield. They work purposefully and co-operate, for example by sharing glue and acknowledging the good work of others. The teaching assistant ensures that pupils use only safety scissors.
81. Eleven-year-olds during the inspection manipulated chalks and pastels effectively using highlight and shade to create an underwater seascape. They had produced cubist sketches in the style of Picasso, and could compare and contrast their own styles with his work. Nine-year-olds have painted in the style of Monet and Gauguin, as well as producing sketches of leaves and silhouettes of buildings against the backdrop of a sunset. Ten-year-olds have created their own paint patterns in the style of African art. They know how to create a harmonious picture using a variety of shapes and colours and higher-attaining pupils include three-dimensional shapes in their composition. They have generally good attitudes, and often work with enthusiasm, perseverance and concentration. Displays around the school show that art is used well in other subjects - the work of six-year-olds, for example, is linked to their study of castles. Across this range of work, pupils were achieving typical standards for their age, but there was little evidence of modelling or clay work.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers help pupils to focus well on detail. In a class of eleven-year-olds, for example, the teacher stressed the importance of proportion, monitored standards closely and gave further instructions to help the pupils achieve higher standards. Lessons are well planned, the pace is usually challenging, correct artistic vocabulary is used and the teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject.
83. Provision for art and design is effectively co-ordinated, and there is a good new scheme of work that deals with progression throughout the school, covers all aspects of the subject and identifies links with other subjects. The school has good resources for the

subject, but the use of computers is under-developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Provision for design and technology is very poor. In most classes the subject has not been attempted. No teaching was observed; one lesson was on the timetable, but was cancelled due to an injury to the teacher, caused by a heavy door. The planning for this lesson was satisfactory, but there was no evidence that any other teaching had recently taken place. In discussion with the inspectors, eleven-year-olds could recall no work they had completed in the subject. At the time of the last inspection, there was insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement on standards at seven, and standards at eleven were below average. The present position represents a deterioration from this.
85. There is no co-ordinator, but the school has a satisfactory range of resources for learning. The subject does not feature sufficiently on the school's curriculum to meet statutory requirements.

GEOGRAPHY

86. No consistent teaching and learning takes place, and standards at seven and eleven are very poor. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average at seven, but average at eleven. The present position represents a significant decline.
87. Two lessons took place during the inspection. These lessons were not planned to promote progress in the National Curriculum, and had more historical than geographical content. In one lesson, work was pitched at a level that was far too difficult for most pupils in the class. The quality of teaching in these lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to poor, and was poor overall. Most pupils in both lessons did not understand what they had to do, and responded with poor behaviour. Eleven-year-olds during the inspection could recall only having completed some work on rivers, about which they knew no detail. There were no records of pupils' work or progress. There is no co-ordinator, and provision does not meet statutory requirements.

HISTORY

88. Standards are broadly average at seven, but below average at eleven. This represents a fall in standards at eleven since the last inspection, though standards have recently begun to recover. The quality of learning for ten and eleven-year-olds is improving, and is now good, with some very good features. Standards are, however, lower than they should be because of interruptions to learning during pupils' school career. The learning of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory between the ages of five and seven, and good between the ages of nine and eleven. It is unsatisfactory and often poor for seven to nine-year olds.
89. Seven-year-olds have broadly average knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. Six-year-old pupils have visited Rochester Castle and know that guards used bows and arrows to protect it. Higher-attaining pupils can compare the ruin of the castle with the busy building it must have been, and consult reference books to find out about life in the castle in their 'castle-shaped' notebooks. At seven, pupils have compared the lives of Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln. The six-year-olds have begun to understand how history can be interpreted in different ways through their study of why Thomas Edison was credited with inventing the first light bulbs rather than Lewis Latimer. Pupils' recall and understanding of these complex issues are in

line with the standard to be expected for their age.

90. Ten and eleven-year-olds were learning effectively about Rome and the Roman invasion of Britain, and about the second world war. Eleven-year-old pupils posed questions of historical enquiry that they had composed as homework, with very good guidance from their teacher, to interview two grandparents about World War Two in Peckham. Among much else, the pupils had learnt that if you heard a bomb explode then it had missed you. Ten-year-olds reached a good standard in a lesson about the Roman invasion of Britain. They understood the BC dating system and the reasons why the Romans invaded Britain. They all paid close attention to detail when watching a video, and one higher-attaining pupil took extensive notes, although most of the class did not. The learning of pupils aged seven to eleven has, however, suffered from interruptions to teaching and from some work that is pitched at too high a level for them to understand. As the improvements to teaching are of recent origin, the quality of writing in most of their books is poor, and work in history is not making the contribution it should be making to literacy. There is little use of computers to support learning in history.
91. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, and a third was very good. In the good lesson for six-year-olds, the teacher used questions very effectively to encourage pupils to explain why life was different in a castle from now, developing their observations and inquiry skills well, despite the disruptive behaviour of a few pupils. In a good lesson for ten-year-olds the teacher used good subject knowledge, clear explanations and well-directed use of an engaging video to assess and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Romans. This, however, often meant starting at a very basic level in order to build the necessary vocabulary. One pupil, for example, did not know the difference between an empire and a palace. In this lesson, the teaching assistant gave effective support to pupils with special educational needs. In the very good lesson for eleven-year-olds, the teacher's high skills in managing behaviour ensured a calm atmosphere as pupils listened attentively and with respect to the World War Two veterans. This lesson contributed much to their personal and cultural development as well as to their understanding of history.
92. The school has no co-ordinator for history. However, the key stage co-ordinators have recently developed medium-term plans that have begun to ensure effective coverage of a selection of topics from the National Curriculum, with a good series of visits to support the programme of work. While this does not yet ensure complete coverage of the National Curriculum for older pupils, it is a very useful improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

93. Provision for information and communication technology is poor. Discussions with eleven-year-olds showed that they had poor knowledge and understanding of the subject for their age, and that they had almost no access to the computers in their classrooms. No teaching was timetabled, and there was no significant use of computers during the inspection. Statutory requirements are not met. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' only experience of using computers was in word-processing, though they were competent in this. The present position represents a decline in standards.
94. There is no co-ordinator for information and communication technology, though the school is giving a high priority to the subject in appointing its new deputy headteacher. The school has bought a new computer suite and arranged training, though the accommodation planned for the suite is too small to accommodate a class.

MUSIC

95. There was too little evidence during the inspection to reach secure judgements about standards and the quality of provision in music at seven and eleven. In the last inspection report, no judgement was made on standards at seven, but standards at eleven were above those expected nationally. The present position therefore represents a decline. In the only music lesson timetabled during the inspection, the progress of eleven-year-olds was very good, and their attainment was in line with standards expected nationally for that part of the syllabus. While there was no music work recorded in books, or by any other means, there was a plentiful supply of untuned percussion instruments in classrooms, and music was properly represented in previous lesson plans.
96. In the very good lesson for eleven-year-olds, pupils improvised melodic and rhythmic phrases by clapping and then recording them in musical notation using quavers, minims and crotchets. Higher-attaining pupils were able to perform four bars of music they had collaborated in pairs to compose. All pupils were able to play 'Three Blind Mice' on the recorder, and could appraise each other's performance. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and was constantly assessing progress and analysing the extra support required by the lower-attaining pupils to enable them to recognise the different values of quavers and crotchets. Her very good class management encouraged these well-motivated pupils to listen with sustained concentration, so that they became a supportive audience.
97. A gospel choir for older pupils meets weekly after school. The singing is melodic, enthusiastic and very tuneful. The pupils maintain harmony and rhythm when singing in unison at assemblies. Resources have recently been increased, and tuned instruments such as cellos, flutes, guitars and recorders have been bought with the Standards Fund to allow for extra-curricular music lessons in the next school year.
98. The music co-ordinator is on long-term sick leave. There is no effective overview of the music curriculum, and so it is unclear how pupils' knowledge and skills are being developed and assessed from year to year. The school has identified the need to focus upon its development of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. There was insufficient evidence to support a judgement on standards at seven. However, the learning of six-year-olds in dance was very poor. Standards are broadly average at eleven, and they are good in swimming where most pupils can swim 25 metres unaided. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with those expected nationally at seven and eleven, but there was too much variation in the quality of learning between classes because of pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour. This problem has worsened.
100. High-attaining eleven-year-olds pass footballs in groups with fluid movements, displaying dexterity, accuracy and good ball control. Ten and eleven-year-olds understand the effects of strenuous exercise and how it improves their health, flexibility and endurance. They know the importance of warming up for energetic activities and of cooling down afterwards. Ten-year-olds can follow the lead of other pupils, dancing rhythmically to percussion music, which they interpret showing sound spatial awareness. At the age of nine, pupils are able to bounce the ball at different heights and speeds using both hands. All pupils wear suitable clothing, and a register is kept to record this. Pupils who do not participate have to record what skills are being taught.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, are fully integrated in lessons. The eleven-year-olds know how to conform to the rules of the game and work co-operatively in different sized groups. However, many nine-year-olds ignore the rules of team activities.

101. The quality of teaching during the inspection ranged from good to poor. It was satisfactory or better in only half of the lessons observed, and was unsatisfactory overall. The better teaching was confined to pupils aged ten to eleven. In these lessons, activities are well structured and designed to improve pupils' skills. Teachers communicate clearly the skills to be taught, and give pupils a clear idea of what is expected through sound demonstrations. They have good subject knowledge and constantly reinforce teaching points to develop specific skills. Lessons are well organised and move at a brisk pace so that pupils stay well on task and develop sound levels of application and concentration. Teachers have appropriate expectations of pupil's behaviour and deal with isolated instances of inappropriate behaviour immediately, as seen in the lesson for eleven-year-olds. Where lessons are unsatisfactory or poor, tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs and do not engage them in their work. When this happens, the complex behavioural difficulties of a few pupils come to dominate and disrupt the entire class. The pace becomes very slow and little learning takes place.
102. Since the last inspection, the school has enhanced its provision with a purpose-built school hall, and the quality and quantity of resources has improved greatly. The school uses a published scheme of work to guide teachers' planning and ensure that there is a broad curriculum. Provision for swimming is good; all eight to eleven-year-olds have more than one term of swimming lessons each year, and many pupils achieve more than the nationally expected standard, often at an early age. The co-ordinator is on long-term sick leave and has been unable to review provision for the subject, including the assessment of progress as planned. The school has identified the need to focus on physical education in its school development plan.