

INSPECTION REPORT

Gordon Infant School

Ilford, Essex

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102808

Headteacher: Miss J Tilley

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck
10090

Dates of inspection: 19th-21st November 2001

Inspection number: 230744
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery and infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 years to 7years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Golfe Road
Ilford
Essex

Postcode: IG1 1SU

Telephone number: 0208 478 2977

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Pearce

Date of previous inspection: 6th – 9th July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10090	Kath Beck	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Curriculum for the Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9587	Diane Jenkin	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?
7694	Martyn Richards	Team inspector	Science Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

6436	Alan Andrews	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	
27484	Ann Leontovitsch	Team inspector	Geography History Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gordon Infant School and nursery is smaller than other primary schools. At the time of the inspection there were 108 children in Years 1 and 2 and 31 children in the reception unit. 34 children attend the nursery part-time in the morning and 27 in the afternoon. Across the school there are 20 more girls than boys. The school serves an economically and ethnically diverse area. The backgrounds of the children are 28% Pakistani, 23% Indian, 9% Bangladeshi, 8% White U.K., 16% white European and 8% Black African heritage. A smaller number of children come from Black Caribbean heritage, Afghanistan and Lithuania. 24 children are refugees, seven of which come from Kosovo. 159 children have been identified as having English as an additional language with 136 at an early stage of language acquisition. 24 children are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Four of these have significant learning difficulties and two carry statements of special educational needs. The school's records of assessment of children's ability on entry to school shows that achievement is generally low in reading, writing and spoken English and mathematical skills. There is little to assist an overall judgement of children's ability on entry to school in their own language. The movement of children in and out of the school is higher than in most other schools nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gordon Infant and nursery is not an effective school as it is not achievement orientated. Standards in national tests are very low in reading, writing and mathematics. Unsatisfactory teaching, low expectations of what children can do and lack of provision to meet the needs of the different groups within the school hinder children's attainment and progress significantly. Poor leadership and management means there is a lack of determination and urgency to drive up standards and enable children to do the best they can while they are in the school. The school is not sufficiently immersed in its community. The school provides poor value for money.

What the school does well

- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Relationships between the children are mostly good.
- Children show respect for adults and respond well to teachers' questions and instructions.
- Some teaching in reception and Year 2.
- Provision for children's spiritual development in assemblies and some lessons during the inspection.
- Provision for moral development is good.
- There are examples of good quality art work.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and coordinators.
- The quality of teaching. Teachers should have higher aspirations for the children.
- Teaching in the nursery so that children make a better start.
- Completion of key issues from the previous inspection report, especially the improvement in provision for children with English as an additional language and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and all aspects of the school's curriculum.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and with English as an additional language or special educational needs.
- Communications between the headteacher, governors, staff and parents.
- The school's response to its community and parents as partners in the learning process so that they have confidence in the school.
- Provision of homework.
- The meeting of statutory requirements.

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

Progress since the previous inspection is poor. Many aspects of the school that were judged to be good are now unsatisfactory. In addition, standards have dropped dramatically and are much worse than they were at the time of the last inspection in 1998. Very little progress has been made in improving provision for children with English as an additional language. A coordinator was appointed for this work, but has recently left and classroom teachers lack similar expertise. The school has detailed assessments of children's progress in English language acquisition, but these are not used to plan work. There have been improvements in financial planning, the provision for children's spiritual development and time available for teaching literacy. A computer suite has been established, but computers are not used often enough to enhance standards in literacy. The school development plan lacks clear priorities to raise standards. Teaching methods and classroom organisation do not take sufficient account of the needs of the children. The insistence of senior management that children spend a substantial amount of time on play activities means a significant proportion of parents and carers have lost confidence in the school. The quality of teaching is not monitored well enough to improve the rate of children's progress.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	E	E	E*	E*
writing	E	E	E*	E*
mathematics	E*	E	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

similar schools = school with a similar number of children eligible for free school meals

The table shows that in 2001, standards of attainment in mathematics were low and in reading and writing they were very low in comparison to all and similar schools. E* means the school's results and performance in these subjects are in the lowest five percent of schools nationally. Assessments made by teachers of children's achievements in science, in 2001, show that standards of attainment were also low. Many infant schools set targets for the number of children to reach expected levels of achievement in national test results each year. Gordon Infants school has chosen not to set such targets and this means the urgency and drive to improve standards is significantly reduced. At the time of the inspection, children's attainments in reading, writing and mathematics were very low, showing little improvement over time. The school does not give sufficient attention to teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills in English or the child's home language which holds back their progress. Children with English as an additional language or those with special educational needs do not achieve well enough, as work is not matched to their needs or abilities. In other subjects, such as religious education, physical education, art and music, children's achievements are similar to those found nationally. In geography, history and information and communication technology and design and technology they are unsatisfactory, as these subjects are not taught often enough. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to meet the early learning goals at the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. They are not on course to meet them in communications, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world or creative development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have good attitudes to learning and try to do their best.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Children are independent and make few demands on teachers. They help each other, sometimes translating instructions for their friends.
Attendance	Very poor. The school is in the lowest 5% of schools in the country for its high rate of unauthorised absence and very high rate of authorised absence.

Children are respectful to adults and respond well to instructions and teachers' questions. There is a positive atmosphere of racial harmony as children play together happily. Families taking extended holidays or moving on without telling the school affect attendance rates. There is evidence that some parents have kept children at home while awaiting transfer to another school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

Some good teaching was observed in reception and Year 2 in mathematics, religious education and art. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in all year groups and often in the nursery. Good lessons promoted knowledge and skills in spoken English, although mostly teaching in literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory, as basic skills in these subjects are not taught effectively. Teachers have low expectations of what children can do and so activities often lack challenge. Children are rarely encouraged to record their work to link spoken and written English. This reduces opportunities for children to demonstrate their developing literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers' lesson planning lacks clarity about what is to be learned so that children's knowledge and understanding is not built up systematically. Teaching methods are ineffective as teachers take too little account of children's abilities and language needs. In some lessons, teachers oversee and facilitate activities, rather than give children clear guidance about their learning. In other lessons, independent or group play is the way in which teachers occupy children rather than extending their learning. In the nursery, insufficient knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and lack of assessment of children's progress according to the stepping-stones hinders children's learning significantly. Important opportunities are missed to develop children's spoken language and social skills. Learning support assistants receive too little information to help the children they work with effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. The curriculum in the nursery and Key Stage 1, does not take account of the needs of all the different groups of children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. Teachers are not linking targets in children's individual education plans to their work in class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. Teachers do not have the skills to provide work that enables children with English as an additional language to make good progress, especially in written and spoken English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Some very good provision for children's spiritual development observed, but not consistent over time. Provision for moral development is good. It is satisfactory in social development but unsatisfactory in cultural

development	development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Children's personal well being is cared for satisfactorily. Checks on children's progress are not used effectively to match work to needs.

A significant number of parents have lost confidence in the school. This reduces the impact of parental involvement on the work of the school and the ways in which parents can help their children at home. Important documents, such as the school prospectus, have an unfriendly tone. They are not translated into other languages and this, together with the attitudes of some staff makes parents feel unwelcome. There are significant weaknesses in curriculum provision for all children. This hinders the progress of a significant number of children. There are no out of school activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Poor leadership stems from a lack of flexibility in the adaptation of teaching approaches to meet the changing context of the school, implementation of new initiatives and in ensuring children's needs are met.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do not have all the information they need to compare standards with those of other schools and fulfil all their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Information about the school's national test results has not been analysed sufficiently to identify the progress of the different groups in the school or bring about improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan lacks clear priorities and a rigorous timetable for improvements in standards.

Poor leadership and management result in poor communications which make it difficult for staff and governors to work closely together to raise standards. Some governors share the parents' lack of confidence in the headteacher and some staff. This makes it hard to apply the principles of best value for money. Planning for the long-term development of the school is unclear. While there is a group of teachers who have been at the school for some time, the school generally has found it hard to recruit and retain teachers in the past two years. Accommodation is adequate, although the reception unit is rather small. The nursery has very good accommodation, but displays do not value children's efforts or reflect the languages and culture of the community in which the children live. Overall, resources are unsatisfactory, especially in the nursery. Software in information and communication technology is limited and there are few dual language books. Staffing is generous in the nursery and sufficient in the rest of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are encouraged to become independent. The development of social skills and racial harmony are encouraged. Children are taught right from wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards of achievement. Leadership and management. Communications and an improved partnership between the parents and school. Homework arrangements. More information about the work children are doing and their progress. Provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The welcome they receive from some staff, especially in the nursery.

Inspectors support fully all the parents' and carers' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment, especially in reading, writing and mathematics at age seven are low. This represents a significant decline in standards since the last inspection in 1998. At that time, standards were below those typically found in most schools in English, mathematics and science.
2. In 2001, results in national tests in reading and writing were very low in comparison with all schools and similar schools. This placed the school in the lowest 5% nationally. Results in mathematics were low in comparison with all schools nationally and with schools in a similar context. In reading and writing, results are the lowest they have been in four years. In reading, writing and mathematics, the gap between the school's results and the national results is widening at a fast rate. Few children achieve high standards of achievement. Over the past two years girls have outperformed boys in all subjects. Boys' achievements are far lower than the achievement of other boys nationally of this age. The school does not expect standards to rise dramatically next year. Predicted results in national tests in 2002, show that the school is not expecting any children to reach higher levels¹ of the National Curriculum in writing.
3. The school's assessments of what children can do when they first start indicate that children's achievement on entry is low in reading, writing, spoken English and mathematics. There is little to show how the school identifies children's achievements in these skills in their own language so that they can be built on and extended. In the nursery, teachers take too little account of the progress children make on the stepping stones towards meeting the early learning goals. Teachers' planning does not identify what the children are to learn in each activity, nor does it meet the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. This should have been implemented in September 2000. As a result children's progress is held back. Children start school with high levels of respect for their teachers and do as they are asked. This means they often stay at an activity, even when it is finished, until the teacher tells them to move on. This restricts opportunities for children to use their initiative to move between activities to extend their learning.
4. Currently, children in the reception year are on course to meet the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Their achievement and progress in communications, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is slow and few children are on course to meet the early learning goals in these areas.
5. The great majority of children in the school still speak first languages other than English, so the quality of provision for them remains of vital importance. The school has made improvements in what is offered since the last inspection, but the provision remains unsatisfactory overall and so children make slow progress.
6. The standards of achievement reached by the time children leave are well below those found nationally and also well below those found in similar schools. By the age of seven, most children who have been at the school from the nursery have made sound

¹ Children aged seven are expected to reach level 2. This is broken down into level 2c (lowest) 2b (expected level) 2a (higher level). In addition a higher level of achievement, level 3 can be reached by able children

progress in acquiring speaking and listening skills. They understand and speak English well enough to benefit from their lessons across the whole curriculum. They enjoy chattering in English and most do so with confidence. Their skills in reading are less well developed. Most read their books confidently and with good expression, but the texts are at a very simple level. While they have learned the sounds associated with some letters, they still lack the strategies they need to deal with many new words. Writing skills lag still further behind. Many children lack basic handwriting skills and have difficulty in spelling any but very simple regular words. As a result, most writing is laboured and stilted. The lack of systematic and effective teaching means the gap between children's oral skills, writing and reading is wide.

7. Children make slow progress as they move through the school. The scrutiny of work and lesson observations illustrates that children's achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are low. In science, they are below those expected, while in music, art, physical education and religious education, achievements are similar to those found in other schools. Children's achievements in geography, history, information and communication technology and design and technology are below those in other schools nationally, as these subjects are not taught often enough.
8. Children's good attitudes in lessons have a positive impact on their learning. The school has a clear policy whereby teachers focus on teaching small groups of children literacy, numeracy, science and art. Other children are given play activities to occupy them while the teacher is busy. These activities develop children's social skills and some spoken English skills, but children are often left for extended periods without the intervention of a teacher. This hinders opportunities for children to develop the specific vocabulary for each subject. Children's good attitudes and behaviour means the teacher is not interrupted when working with small groups and lessons generally have a positive atmosphere. However, children do become bored and find it hard to remain on task. They talk quietly together and play sensibly until the teacher redirects them. Teachers' low expectations of what children can do limits opportunities for the children to apply their developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Occasionally noise levels from the open areas hinder opportunities for children to hear clearly what the teacher is saying.
9. When taking the results from 1997 into account, the number of children reaching expected standards has risen and fallen at a fast rate in alternate years. The school was awarded an achievement award for its rapid rise in standards between 1999 and 2000. Since then results had dipped dramatically so that they are worse than they were in 1997. They are the lowest they have been in four years in reading and writing. The school put this dramatic dip down to the number of children with special educational needs within the group of children that was tested. However, overall the school has a similar number of children with special educational needs as other schools nationally. Other schools are improving at a faster rate. Provision for children with special educational needs and for English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not link children's individual education plans to classroom work. Nor do they take into account the assessment of children's progress in English language acquisition when planning work and so it does not match their abilities.
10. The school, unlike many infant schools, does not set targets for achievement in national tests each year. As a result, the urgency and determination to drive up standards is significantly reduced. Over time, results have not been analysed by gender or by the different ethnic groups within the school. As a result the school does not have sufficient information to overcome weaknesses in children's progress to raise standards.

11. The overall decline in standards of achievement is due to:
 - very low attendance rates;
 - low expectations of what children can do;
 - provision of activities which lack challenge;
 - weak assessment procedures, especially during lessons;
 - lack of detailed lesson plans which identify clearly what teachers expect children to achieve;
 - unsatisfactory teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy;
 - provision for children with special educational needs or English as an additional language which does not meet their needs;
 - the structure of the school day. The school day does not start until 9.15am. The first lesson of the day starts at 9.45am. Often the first main lesson in the afternoon is at 1.50pm. Time lost when children change their shoes several times a day, plus the delayed start reduces opportunities to build on children's enthusiasm for learning when they are at their most alert;
 - high rate of movement of children in and out of the school. It does too little to find out what children can do and help them make progress while they are in the school.

12. The percentage of children on the school's register for special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. It includes two children with statements of special educational needs. The school has a two-day a week special educational needs coordinator who manages the provision and liaises with outside agencies. At the time of the previous inspection the school's special educational needs coordinator was full-time. The current coordinator is knowledgeable in this area of work, but does not see teachers' planning or have any responsibility for the work of the support staff, none of whom are directly linked to the special educational needs provision.

13. All the support for special educational needs is given within class lessons and the progress of children relies heavily on the daily programme of work provided by class teachers. The children's individual education plans are written well and include clear and precise targets. However, they are not used consistently by all teachers to guide and inform their curriculum planning. In some lessons and in the scrutiny of work, it is evident that tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the children's needs. They either do the work incorrectly or struggle to make progress. As a result, the achievement of children with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The previous inspection found that children with special educational needs were supported well and made good progress.

14. Lack of support for a child with a statement of special educational need has led to parents withdrawing the child whilst awaiting space at a nearby school. The child was in attendance during the inspection for the mornings only. This means the child has been unable to access the provision set out in the statement of educational need where support should be provided for a whole day. Therefore statutory requirements are not met.

15. The scrutiny of work and lesson observations confirms the low standards of achievement, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This is mainly due to a lack of opportunities for children to develop their skills in spoken and written English. Teachers make few links between children's reading, speaking and writing skills in these subjects. Very little work is recorded and this makes it difficult for children to demonstrate and practice what they know. This makes it hard for the children to know how well they are doing and what they need to learn next. It also puts them at a disadvantage in written tests.

16. Children's achievements in information and communication technology are not as good as in other schools. Resources have improved since the previous inspection as there is now a small computer suite and each teaching unit has computers available for children to use during their lessons. The computer suite has been in operation since May 2001. Children can enter information they have collected into a database and draw pictures using a paint program. Some in Year 1 can save their work. Time is set aside to teach information and communication technology skills explicitly to groups of children in the computer suite. However, teachers generally, do not have sufficient confidence to use computers regularly in their other lessons or enhance skills in literacy as recommended at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The children's positive attitudes and good behaviour make a valuable contribution to their learning. However, the school does not take full advantage of this and opportunities are often lost to enable children to make effective progress. This is especially true in the nursery when it is thought children take time to settle down to its routines and in lessons where children are occupied rather than set tasks which challenge and extend their learning.
18. The majority of children display positive attitudes to their learning and a significant number of parents stated their children are happy to be in school. This is supported by inspection evidence. Children show interest in their work, settle quickly to their tasks and sustain their concentration. Children listen attentively to the teacher, respond well to questions and are keen to contribute to the lesson, trying hard to please. Sometimes, children in groups not directly supervised by the teacher find it hard to carry on with their work without help, but remain well behaved. The positive attitudes reported at the last inspection have been sustained.
19. The attitudes children bring to learning English as their second language are very positive and help them make progress. They are fully aware of how important fluency in English is and they work hard to develop their skills. While a few prefer to listen carefully, most are keen to contribute to class discussions. They know their efforts will be welcomed even when their skills are still at an early stage of development. They invariably behave well in lessons and try to help each other, for example by translating a misunderstood instruction into a community language.
20. Behaviour in lessons is good. The children put up their hands to answer questions and are polite and well mannered. Behaviour at lunchtime and playtime is good and the children move around the school in a very orderly manner. No incidents of bullying or racial tension were seen during the inspection. There is a good sense of community within the school amongst the children of the various ethnic groups. Children from all backgrounds interact very well with each other and play happily together. The children are delightful and very willing to chat to the inspectors about themselves and their work. The good standards of behaviour identified in the previous report have also been maintained.

21. Relationships between the children are good. They are kind and considerate to each other and show respect to teachers and other adults. They work collaboratively and share resources well, often helping one another with their learning. In discussions, the children listen to each other's point of view and show respect for other children's feelings and beliefs.
22. When they are given the opportunity to show initiative the children respond well. They carry out helpful tasks around the school and act as monitors in the classroom. Sometimes, opportunities for children to work things out for themselves are missed, due to over direction by the teacher.
23. In this multi-ethnic and multi-faith school community children are used to meeting values and beliefs different from their own. They are tolerant of differences and respectful when religious or cultural issues are discussed. They relate easily to children of other ethnic groups and they appreciate how important beliefs and customs are to those who hold them. They respond with delight and surprise to natural life around them; to the bubbles they make in science and the snails they studied on a school visit. Although young, they are learning important lessons about what it means to be human.
24. The respect children have for each other promotes good behaviour. They are careful to avoid doing or saying anything which might hurt another child. They are trustworthy in class and undertake small classroom jobs responsibly. They work happily together in groups during lessons. The curriculum does not offer many opportunities for them to show initiative, but they respond very reliably when the occasion arises.
25. Attendance is poor and well below the national average. In particular, the level of unauthorised absence is very high. As reported at the previous inspection, poor attendance is primarily the result of the extended family holidays of some ethnic minority families and the delays in being able to remove from the register the names of children who have moved away. There is evidence that some children with special educational needs have been kept away from school while parents await a place at another school. The school has tried strategies to tackle poor attendance and to impress on parents the necessity for their child's regular, consistent attendance at school. There was a slight improvement with attendance last year, but for 2000 to 2001 the figure has dropped back to 88.9%. The poor attendance has an adverse effect on children's achievement and progress. Punctuality of children attending the school is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. Teaching is unsatisfactory. This represents a significant decline since the previous inspection in 1998 when much of the teaching was judged to be good. Of the 46 lessons observed, 11 were good, 26 satisfactory and 9 were unsatisfactory. All the good teaching was observed in one reception class and two Year 2 classes. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in all year groups, including the nursery. This has a significant impact on children's learning and they make insufficient progress as they move through the school. The scrutiny of work and teachers' lesson plans show that, while some satisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, it is unsatisfactory over time and hinders progress.

27. Good teaching was observed in mathematics and physical education in reception as well as in art and religious education, especially in Year 2. The features of good teaching are:
- activities with clear learning intentions and outcomes;
 - practical experiences which bring learning alive;
 - direct teaching of specific word recognition skills;
 - secure subject knowledge;
 - imaginative ideas;
 - the promotion of good progress in social skills and language development;
 - development of skills, especially in art.
28. The main reasons for the unsatisfactory teaching are:
- teachers' low aspirations for the children;
 - low expectations of what children can do particularly in reading and writing English;
 - insufficient teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills;
 - few regular checks of how well children are doing in lessons;
 - the lack of provision to meet the needs of all children including those with English as an additional language or special educational needs;
 - the cycle of activities, many based on tasks to occupy children, which slows the rate of their progress, especially over time;
 - unsatisfactory planning which omits what children are expected to learn during lessons.
29. Teaching in the nursery is often unsatisfactory as teachers lack a clear understanding of the requirements of the guidance on the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage introduced nationally in September 2000. Activities do not take sufficient account of children's needs. There are few rich and stimulating experiences. Role-play areas do not include the materials, equipment or displays that reflect the community the children come from and the wider world. Resources are old and do not always inspire the children to initiate their own learning. Activities are not planned well enough to be as purposeful as they ought to be. Low expectations that children will sustain a full nursery session quickly, reduces time available for children to learn and for parents to be involved as effective partners in the learning process. Nursery nurses and learning support assistants do their best to help the children, but work under the direction of the nursery coordinator.
30. In reception and Years 1 and 2, teachers make insufficient links between children's spoken and written language. In literacy, they often omit the teaching of the sounds letters make, spelling, grammar and punctuation. In numeracy, few children are invited to contribute to the learning of others by explaining their methods of calculation in mental arithmetic sessions. The lack of development of reading and writing skills hinders children's progress across all other subjects.
31. During the inspection, teachers provided plans for each lesson. This is not their normal practice. Lessons are usually taken from an overall outline for each subject over the half term. These plans are often generic and give little indication of what children are to have learned by the end of the each half term. Teachers' lesson plans did not identify how the needs of bright children would be met nor how the individual

education plans of those with special educational needs would be taken into account. Similarly, teachers were not planning for children with English as an additional language. As teachers were unclear about what the children were to achieve, they gave too little guidance and made few checks on the progress children were making during the lesson and this means teachers find it difficult to adapt work in following lessons to accommodate children's different needs.

32. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has still not established a clear rationale for matching the style of teaching to the objectives of the lesson. Whole class teaching remains generally under-used as a teaching strategy. In many lessons there are often more groups than available staff and some groups of children then have too much time at tasks with insufficient teaching input.
33. Learning support assistants provide valuable additional support to teachers in many ways. However, teachers do not communicate with them clearly what the children are to achieve. Often learning support assistants spend considerable time listening to teachers' introductions and explanations at the beginning and end of lessons and that limits the impact they have on children's progress.
34. Teachers generally do not have sufficient confidence or expertise in the use of information and communication technology. They are undergoing training, but this is at an early stage. As a result, information and communication technology is not used often enough in literacy, numeracy and science to support learning or to develop skills in English as an additional language. Teachers in the nursery do not recognise sufficiently the important role computers can play to develop children's skills in English and this was so at the time of the last inspection.
35. Teachers have detailed information about the needs of children with English as an additional language, however, it is not used rigorously enough to plan work precisely to meet children's needs and teaching is therefore unsatisfactory. While children receive some additional language support in small groups from a part-time teacher and from learning support assistants, the main opportunity for accelerating their language learning is the daily literacy lesson. At present these lessons help children develop and practise some language skills, but do not necessarily teach the things the children most need to know. This is because the planning of literacy lessons takes too little account of the particular needs of the children as indicated by their assessments. The small group lessons taught by the part-time teacher also broaden children's knowledge of language, but these also are not based precisely enough on what assessments show to be the children's priority needs.
36. In lessons in other subjects, such as science and mathematics, teachers sometimes underestimate what children learning English as an additional language can understand and do not challenge them sufficiently. This said, teachers make efforts to encourage children's spoken language development. Some question effectively, and encourage children to answer in an extended form rather than with single words.
37. All the teaching of children with special educational needs is carried out in class lessons. A small amount of it is undertaken by the coordinator for this area of work. Mostly it is provided by class teachers who sometimes deploy support staff to help them. Relationships are good and children are usually keen to please and to do their best. However, the tasks are not always chosen to reflect the needs of the children and they find it difficult to complete the work correctly. When this happens progress is unsatisfactory. Support staff are sometimes not made fully aware of how the work

they are carrying out is linked to children's individual targets. As a result, their efforts are not as effective as they might be.

38. Teachers do not expect children to complete much written work and this hinders their progress when they come to take the tests and papers are unfamiliar to them. There were some limited examples of work having been marked but generally there was too little work for teachers to mark and encourage children to improve. There is now a school policy for homework, although the arrangements are inappropriate. Homework is not set on a regular basis, nor is it linked to class lessons. Parents are very unhappy that their children do not receive a small amount of homework, reading, spelling or multiplication tables to learn on a daily basis. This means homework is not used effectively to build on what children have learned in lessons and enhance their progress.

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

39. When the school was last inspected, the curriculum was found to be broadly satisfactory. Too little time was given to English and this has now been corrected. The inspection report expressed reservations about the provision for children under five and was critical of the arrangements made for teaching English as an additional language. It also noted that there were no extracurricular clubs.
40. Provision for the Foundation Stage is now poor and does not follow the guidance recommended for children of this age. Provision for children learning English as a second language has improved in some respects but remains unsatisfactory. There are still no extra-curricular clubs. Special educational needs provision, found to be good at the time of the last inspection, is now unsatisfactory. At present the overall quality and range of learning opportunities provided is unsatisfactory.
41. The school's arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage are poor, especially in the nursery. This stems mainly from teachers' lack of knowledge about the curriculum for children of this age. The learning environment in the nursery is bland and does not reflect the community in which the school is situated. The outside areas are used effectively to enhance children's physical development. However, the curriculum is not structured as carefully as it should be. Too little account is taken of the children's different starting points so children do not build on what they can already do. Children are often directed to different tasks which limits the choices they can make. There is too little attention to developing children's spoken language in English and their first language. The last inspection criticised the lack of role-play activities and this is still the case. There are few dual language books to enable children to develop their literacy skills. Interventions by learning support assistants enable children to extend their learning but there is no clear guidance to ensure children get the most out of each activity. This is better in reception than in the nursery.

42. The experiences of the children are significantly reduced when teachers take the view that children take a long time to settle into the nursery, rather than providing exciting tasks which enthuse children and encourage them to want to stay. Books and stories represent a traditional English culture, while those of other cultures are not represented. The strength in the curriculum is that children are encouraged to play together happily so that there is racial harmony and friendship.
43. A broad programme of work is offered in the infant classes. All required National Curriculum subjects are taught, although not always often or in enough depth. Children's personal, social and health education receives appropriate attention. Children learn, for example, about healthy living, personal safety and things which are safe, or unsafe, to eat. Some lessons are practical and interesting. Field trips to local centres such as Epping Forest and the 'Ragged School' at Mile End assist work in history, geography and science. Some lessons in religious education are particularly interesting, especially when teachers speak from their own experience of different faith groups.
44. The school has introduced the National programmes for teaching literacy and numeracy but give too little attention to teaching basic skills in these subjects. In addition, implementation of the initiatives has not taken sufficient account of the particular needs of the children in the school. Consequently the new programmes are not having sufficient impact on raising standards.
45. At the time of the last inspection, there were major concerns about the provision for the very large number of children learning English as an additional language. The school did not have the assessment arrangements needed to know each child's strengths and weaknesses in English. This meant teachers were not clear about what needed to be taught next. Too few checks were made on children's progress and staff were not always used where they would have most impact on raising standards. These concerns were sufficiently serious to become key issues to be dealt with.
46. The school has acted on the recommendation of the previous inspection to appoint a specialist subject leader for English as an additional language, but she has recently left. The role of the subject leader was to work intensively with groups of children and to help classroom teachers plan lessons suited to the needs of these children. She developed a good range of assessment procedures to give teachers a much clearer idea of where each child is in their language acquisition and what he or she needs to learn next. However, in the absence of the coordinator, this work has stopped. Teachers are not using these assessment procedures to continue to track children's progress carefully, nor are they using information that is available to plan work to meet children's needs. This hinders the progress of these children significantly.
47. The school has put in place procedures to discourage racist language or behaviour. An incidents book is kept to record details of any such occurrences and teachers have written guidance of how to handle these if they arise. The evidence of the inspection is that the school is a racially harmonious and tolerant community.

48. The school has just begun to collect information to enable it to track the progress in learning made by each child. This data can be used to help make sure all the different groups represented in the school community benefit equally from what it offers. The school has identified its more able children and those with special educational needs and takes some note of how each of these groups progresses. However, this information is too new to have had any real impact on improving standards. At present, many lessons do not provide any extra challenge for the more able. Little systematic monitoring is carried out to check on the relative progress of the school's different ethnic groups, or of its refugee children. Similarly there is no systematic analysis of girls' and boys' attainment and progress. Test results over the past five years and in the current year, show that girls regularly do better than boys in English and mathematics. Until the school adopts thorough procedures for regular checking of the performance of these different groups, the school cannot ensure that particular groups of children are not disadvantaged.
49. Overall, the school makes satisfactory arrangements for children with special educational needs. The procedures for identifying such children are sound and comply with the National Code of Practice. The school liaises appropriately with outside agencies and the children benefit from this. Their individual education plans are written by the coordinator for special needs in consultation with class teachers. They contain targets that identify precisely what the children need to learn. However, these are not always used effectively by class teachers to help plan work in lessons and, as a result, children's progress is unsatisfactory.
50. No extra-curricular clubs are offered. The school makes little use of the contributions its local community might make to the children's learning. A member of the local police force visits to talk about personal safety and a small number of parents help actively in school. Despite its good written policy for multicultural education, little of the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of its locality finds its way into school. Parents are right to feel a gulf of misunderstanding exists between the school and its community.
51. The school maintains a satisfactory regular dialogue with its main feeder playgroup and the two primary schools to which the children transfer at the age of seven. These links allow exchange of information and ease children's transition from one stage of education to another. However, there are few cultural links, shared social events, or opportunities to discuss matters of curriculum and teaching methodology.
52. While critical of much of what the school offers, parents nevertheless rightly appreciate the provision it makes for children's personal development. Spiritual and moral development are catered for well and are among the school's strengths. A good written policy guides work in this area. Assemblies observed were of a very high standard. They are quiet, reflective and reverent. In a multi-faith area such as this, it is a tribute to the school that no parents have asked for their children to be withdrawn from daily assemblies. In lessons too, children are offered opportunities to think about right and wrong behaviour. They talk about fairness and being honest and are moved by the beauty of natural objects such as insects and plants seen on their study trips. A group of reception children were seen to be spellbound by the colours, reflections and floating motion of bubbles they made. The school also makes sound provision for children's social development. They are encouraged to work

cooperatively in small groups, to listen courteously to each other and to undertake classroom tasks, such as handing in registers and distributing milk.

53. The school does too little to promote children's cultural development and so provision is unsatisfactory. In the arts, children produce some sensitive painting and see reproductions of work by the great masters such as Monet. They recently enjoyed a visit by a theatre group which dramatised the water cycle as part of the science programme of work and most classes have the opportunity to visit places of interest. However, the programmes in music, drama and expressive movement are weak. There are no clubs, such as recorder playing or cooking, to enrich cultural awareness. There are few chances for the children to enjoy the rich and varied cultures of this multi-ethnic community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. There is a happy atmosphere between the children who are learning in a secure environment which provides a foundation on which to make progress. Children respond well to the school's clear expectations of good behaviour and kindness to others. Teachers praise and encourage positive behaviour and attitudes. Most staff show a caring attitude towards the children. However, some parents are right to express concern about instances of insensitive management when dealing with children's particular needs and feel the school lacks flexibility in providing individual support, especially if their child has special educational needs. The individual education plans for children with special educational needs are written well and reviewed regularly. The special needs coordinator endeavours to work closely with class teachers during the two days each week she is in school.
55. Children's well being is ensured through sound procedures for dealing with illness, accidents and administering medicines together with clear routines and adequate supervision. There is a comfortable medical room and staff are trained in first aid. Appropriate child protection procedures are known by staff. Comprehensive guidance and policies on matters of health and safety have been drawn up. A lot of work has been carried out to ensure the school buildings are secure.
56. There is a clear policy for behaviour which incorporates rules, rights and responsibilities and a very good anti-bullying policy which includes requirements to record and monitor any incidents of bullying. Staff follow the policies consistently so they are effective in practice. Personal development is monitored informally through discussion and formally through entry profiles and in the children's record of achievement. However, this is not enough to track how well children are progressing socially and personally.
57. The attendance policy gives clear guidance which is followed by staff. Records of attendance fulfil statutory requirements. The school has sound systems to follow up absence and lateness, which work well for the usual day to day situations, backed up by the Education Welfare Officer who is involved when necessary. However, although the school feels it has tried hard it has had little success in persuading parents that they should not remove their children from school for extended holidays. In addition the school's lack of flexibility in dealing with individual children with special educational needs, the policy of allowing children to attend for half days only if they have been absent for some time and insensitive management has led to parents keeping their children at home. This has a detrimental effect on attendance and hinders children's achievement and progress.

58. Procedures for assessing children's progress are unsatisfactory as teachers record the work covered, rather than what children have learned and need to learn next. The portfolios of children's work kept to demonstrate progress, contain little recorded work. Parental complaints that they do not see their children's work on open evenings are upheld. There is little recorded work for them to see. Assessment of children's progress in English as an additional language was far more rigorous while there was a coordinator with this responsibility, but the information is not used to plan work that meets children's needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. Evidence from the parents' meeting and the questionnaire shows that a significant number of parents have lost trust and confidence in the school. This is a serious barrier to the school's ability to work in partnership with parents and encourage them to contribute to their children's learning. A very significant number of parents are dissatisfied with what the school provides, its expectations and the standards it achieves. The school has become distanced from its community. 57% of parents responding to the questionnaire believe that the school does not work closely with parents and 45% do not feel comfortable about approaching the school. This is a great deterioration from the "sound partnership with parents" reported at the last inspection.
60. Many parents believe that children do not progress as well as they should and that the school does not welcome their involvement. A home / school reading diary has been discontinued. The school does not provide information or advice to parents in the main community languages, or learning support packs for children who are away from school for any length of time. There is little evidence of the children's bilingual, sometimes trilingual, skills being recognised and celebrated in the school. There are too few reading texts in dual languages, or in community languages and those that do exist are not used enough.
61. Although the school does provide information in a number of ways, parents still feel communication is poor. An evening explaining 'speaking and listening' was arranged last November and was well attended. Booklets are provided for each year group and 'parental support sheets' have been distributed to give parents ideas to help their child at home. However, these documents are not produced in parents' home language and some of them are very recent and have not yet had time to impact on parents' perceptions of being ill-informed. The prospectus is a standard one and fulfils statutory requirements, but it has little to say about how the school responds to the very particular needs of its children. It is a dense, unfriendly document with no reference to the availability of information in other languages. It is quite impenetrable for a parent with insecure English. The governors' annual report has failed to report progress on the action plan following the last inspection which is a statutory requirement. A home school agreement has been put in place after consultation with parents.
62. There are two formally arranged parent and teacher meetings each year and the annual reports on children's progress give a clear indication of what children know, understand and can do. They now include the targets for improvement recommended by the last inspection report. However, 56% of parents responding to the questionnaire do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on. This

stems from the lack of opportunities to see their child's work and help their children with homework.

63. The prospectus states that the school feels the informal day-to-day dialogue between parents and teachers is beneficial to both parties, but, in reality, parents do not feel this dialogue is encouraged. Parents are invited to class assemblies and were invited to the recent Harvest Festival and the Cultural Celebration and the sports afternoons in the summer. However, a significant number of parents say that the school does not welcome them on a regular basis. They believe that their help is not wanted, despite staff saying that it is. Some parents and carers pointed out that the nursery was particularly unwelcoming and inspection evidence supports this view.
64. There is a policy for homework, but it is not working in practice. 62% of parents responding to the questionnaire do not agree that their child gets the right amount of work to do at home. Parents at the meeting were very unhappy about the lack of regular homework. They are right to believe that the lack of regular tasks, which children can do at home, holds back progress and prevents parents from becoming involved in their child's education.
65. The school's partnership with a significant number of parents has broken down, diminishing the impact of parental contributions to raising standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, the headteacher was said to provide a clear educational direction for the school and was committed to raising standards. However, the headteacher did not monitor the school's provision rigorously enough, especially that for children with English as an additional language. The relative achievements of the different groups in the school were not monitored. There was no coordinator for English as an additional language. This situation has not changed, although a coordinator was appointed for a short period of time. Similarly there were few formal procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching across the school. Coordinators took little responsibility for standards in their subject. The governing body was said to support the work of the school and was involved in determining policy. The school development plan, while identifying priorities for the forthcoming year, was not based on audits of provision, nor did it take into account the longer term development of the school.
67. The situation now is that leadership is poor and is having little impact on standards. Progress in relation to the key issues and other areas identified in the previous inspection report have not been addressed with the required vigour to drive up and sustain good standards. The school managed to improve standards rapidly between 1999 and 2000 and received an achievement award, but since then, standards have

declined dramatically. The school's performance and results mean it is now in the lowest 5% of schools nationally and does not do enough for its children.

68. Unlike many infants schools, the school does not set targets for achievement at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, there is little urgency or determination to drive up standards. The school day passes at a leisurely rate. The day begins at 9.15am with registration followed by assembly. This means the first lesson does not take place until 9.45am. In the afternoon the first main lesson is usually at 1.50pm. The school explains this as taking time on activities to settle the children down to prepare them for learning. Children absent from school for some time, or joining the school for the first time, are admitted for the mornings only initially. This dulls children's enthusiasm for learning and reduces the importance of attendance at school to learn.
69. The morale of some staff, including learning support assistants, has been reduced and a significant number of parents have lost confidence. Staff turnover is high. This loss of confidence stems from the school's teaching and learning policy which states *the development of play is the vital cornerstone in the learning of young children*. Senior staff follow this policy rigidly, but observations show that in reality, children spend time on tasks which occupy them, rather than take them forward in their learning. Communications between all staff are poor. In particular, learning support assistants are not sufficiently aware of what they are to do to help children achieve when they are working with them.
70. The governors are unable to carry out their role effectively as they do not receive sufficient information from the headteacher. They do not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are unable to compare the school's performance with that of other schools as the information is not supplied to them. Some governors have also lost confidence in the headteacher. They are fully aware of parental concerns and feel frustrated that they have been unable to bring about changes. They have not been welcomed into the school and have struggled to implement a programme of visits over the last eighteen months.
71. At the time of the last inspection, the school development plan did not identify priorities for developments to raise standards. It still does not. It is a list of tasks and activities to be carried out over the year. It takes no account of the longer-term development of the school, nor does it identify the impact of developments on children's achievement. The poor quality of the school development plan, the lack of involvement of governors, parents and children in its construction means there is no clear educational direction for the school that enables everyone to work together to benefit the children. The school's policy on play is so strong and inflexible that questions and new ideas are unwelcome. This has led to the decline in leadership and management. The school has found it hard to meet the demand for the rapid introduction of National initiatives and adapt them to meet the children's needs. There is little agreement between the staff, headteacher, governors and parents about the ways in which everyone can work together to raise standards.

72. The headteacher and staff are aware that standards are too low, but they are taking little action to improve the situation. Little time has been spent analysing previous nationally recognised test results to identify areas in which the school can improve. Coordinators play little part in analysis of results and are unaware of the children's strengths and weaknesses in their subject. As a result, they are unable to provide additional support for their colleagues. The key issue for monitoring curriculum and standards more rigorously as set out in the previous inspection, has not been addressed. This is due in part to staffing shortages. The headteacher took on class teaching role which limited time for coordinators to be released from class to carry out their role. However, the school policy on play makes it difficult for the headteacher to monitor teaching rigorously against published national criteria for what makes good teaching. This seriously hinders the raising of standards.
73. The school roll is reducing gradually. This is due to a change in the school's number to admit from 35 to 30 to meet government regulations on a class size. A change in the local authority's admissions policy means that children are admitted from the nursery to the reception year in September and January. This has reduced the number of children in nursery. The school claims there are not enough children in the immediate area to fill the vacancies in the nursery. Parents and carers say that it is unwelcoming.
74. In 1998, parents were said to support the aims and values of the school. While there is good emphasis in the school values on developing the children socially, morally and physically as well as caring for their general well-being, there is no emphasis on achievement. Parents now have serious concerns about the school, including its leadership and management. They are critical of the school's lack of aspirations for their children and the lack of recognition of the community in which the children live. Also with the work children are asked to do at home. The aims of the reception unit are linked to children's social development. There is little mention of achievements in learning other than to develop their understanding of concepts through first hand practical experiences and talk, in order to lay foundations for later written recording. As the children do not record their work, this aim is not met.
75. The overall leadership and management of provision for teaching English as an additional language is poor. There has not been effective action to drive up standards and productive relationships with parents and community have not been developed. Literacy teaching has not been monitored closely enough to ensure that teaching time is used to best advantage and that work is precisely tailored to children's needs. Too few staff have received up to date training in English as an additional language. There is little systematic monitoring of the relative achievement of different pupil groups. The recommendations of the last inspection have only been partially implemented.
76. The part-time special educational needs coordinator is currently reviewing the school's policy statement for this area of the school's work. National requirements are met, but the management and organisation of the special needs provision is hampered because the coordinator does not have sufficient time to look at teachers'

planning or monitor the work in lessons. As a result, children are sometimes set tasks that are inappropriate for their needs.

77. Resources for information and communication technology were not provided in the nursery at the time of the last inspection and this is still the case. The headteacher and nursery staff say this is because children should not be playing on them, they should spend time on other activities which develop their social skills and spoken language. The up to date educational value of computers in assisting the development in social and language skills appears not to have been recognised. In addition, the lack of such a resource contravenes the guidance for the curriculum in the Foundation Stage.
78. While there is an acceptance of the need for improvement and willingness, especially on the part of governors and parents, to bring about rapid improvement, the school's capacity to succeed is poor. It is in urgent need of strong leadership and management which will drive up standards and regain the confidence of parents and the community.
79. The school has a satisfactory complement of suitably qualified teachers, although some have not been in post long. They include a newly qualified teacher. This lack of time working in the school is balanced by the longer overall service in the school of other teachers. Staffing in the nursery is generous at the present time.
80. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its number of learning support assistants. They are shared across all classes and are keen to make a worthwhile contribution to children's attainment and progress. They meet fortnightly with an experienced member of the teaching staff. However, they are not always kept informed about school matters and their deployment in lessons is ineffective. This is because they sometimes do not receive sufficient information and direction about the tasks they are to undertake with children. In addition, it is not always made clear how the tasks link with particular targets, such as those in the individual education plans of children with special educational needs.
81. Administrative staff help to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a daily basis. However, some parents feel that they are not always welcomed in a friendly manner. The lunchtime supervisors make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school during the lunch break.
82. There are satisfactory job descriptions and a system of performance management to improve the quality of teaching is in place. Most staff training is linked to the performance management system, but the introduction of National initiatives on literacy and numeracy have also been priorities recently. The school recognises the importance of staff training, but its programme to induct newly qualified teachers does not give the support needed to help them settle quickly and effectively into their role. The training is having little impact on standards as staff make few adaptations to their practice to enhance standards.
83. Accommodation is satisfactory and maintained well. It includes enclosed outdoor areas for Foundation Stage children. However, lack of space in the school means

there is no specific library area and this limits the development of children's research skills.

84. Resources are unsatisfactory overall. At the Foundation Stage, some resources are out of date and rather worn. The provision lacks representation of the community the school now serves. Throughout the school, there are not enough dual language texts and texts in community languages. There are insufficient reading books, particularly for the older and more able readers and this hinders their progress. In history, there is a lack of artefacts to support and enrich the work the children do. The newly established computer suite is not equipped to take a whole class to work on computers at the same time and there is a general lack of software. Resources for all other curriculum areas and for special educational needs are satisfactory.
85. The last inspection found the school's management of its budget to be satisfactory, but that it was carrying forward too large a surplus from year to year. The most recent audit confirms that the school's accounts are still managed well. Audit recommendations for improvement are carried out effectively.
86. The school's income and expenditure are higher than in most schools. The money the school receives for specified purposes, such as the education of children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities, is correctly applied. This year's budget forecasts a large deficit, to be met from accumulated surplus funds. This is because of high expenditure on external improvements. As a result, a much smaller, but appropriate sum will be available to meet unexpected circumstances, or carried forward into next year.
87. The school development plan indicates how the school intends to allocate its resources each year. The present plan is not based on a sufficiently rigorous analysis of standards of achievement and the identification of clear strategies to raise those standards. The governors lack the information to make an effective contribution to the plan. They do not receive monthly expenditure accounts and so are poorly placed to respond quickly if there is a risk of overspending in any area of the budget. Other than the Chairperson, governors are not aware of how the standards in the school compare with those in similar schools. Consequently, they are hindered and ill-informed when asked to agree performance targets each year. While the governors regularly seek tenders for goods and services and consult parents on some issues, such as the home school agreement, their lack of awareness of the school's performance means they cannot carry out their primary task of applying resources in the most efficient way to ensure improved standards.
88. Taking into account the school's expenditure per pupil, the low standards achieved, the extent of parental concern and the lack of improvement since the last inspection, the school currently offers poor value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. The governors, headteacher and staff should take urgent action to:
- (1) improve standards in all subjects, especially in reading, writing and mathematics and information and communication technology;
 - (2) improve the quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and coordinators;
 - (3) raise the quality of teaching, especially teacher's expectations and aspirations for the children they teach, throughout the school;
 - (4) raise the quality of teaching, curriculum provision and resources in the nursery, so children make a better start;
 - (5) complete the key issues from the previous inspection report in relation to the improvement in provision for children with English as an additional language and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and all aspects of the school's curriculum;
 - (6) improve the teaching of children with special educational needs or English as an additional language so that it fully meets their needs and enhances their rate of progress. Ensure that lessons are based more rigorously on the evidence provided by the school's assessment systems;
 - (7) make sure communications between all members of staff, governors and parents are clear. This is to enable all interested parties to understand what the school is trying to achieve;

- (8) develop procedures to make sure the school is more responsive to and better reflects its broad community. This includes ensuring the school reflects its multi-ethnic make up in books, resources, curriculum and displays, doing more to make parents feel more welcome in the school and re-establishing relationships with parents as partners in the learning process;
- (9) clarify the policy for homework, its consistent implementation and ensure it is fully understood by parents;
- (10) meet statutory requirements for the governors annual report to parents, induction of newly qualified teachers and curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	11	26	9	0	0
Percentage	0%	0%	24%	57%	20%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	142
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	27

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	159

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	56
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	60

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.6

School data	2.7
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 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	31	20	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	15	16	18
	Total	31	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (74)	67 (74)	75 (70)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	17	12
	Girls	11	16	14
	Total	22	33	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	43 (70)	65 (74)	51 (79)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	9
Black – other	3
Indian	25
Pakistani	30
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	1
White	19
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

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	593,700
Total expenditure	600,603
Expenditure per pupil	2,705
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,088
Balance carried forward to next year	46,185

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	27	16	8	5
My child is making good progress in school.	16	37	18	21	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	39	13	6	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	18	8	52	10
The teaching is good.	15	32	16	21	16
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	24	23	34	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	31	16	24	19	10
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	21	27	23	18	11
The school works closely with parents.	15	18	24	32	11
The school is well led and managed.	24	21	16	31	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	37	19	10	16
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	21	21	26	16

Other issues raised by parents

A significant number of parents raised concerns about:

- the high level of turnover of staff and children;
- children not being told that their teachers were leaving;
- the size of the reception unit when all children are in school in the new year;
- the impression that the school uses the number of immigrants and refugees as an 'excuse' for low attainment.

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

90. Children are admitted to the nursery classes in the term after their third birthday. There are two admission dates, one in October and one in November in the Autumn Term. There is one admission date in each of the Spring and Summer Terms. Few children attend a full nursery session immediately. Some attend for as little as half an hour to begin with and this is extended to a full session over four or five weeks. Parents and carers confirm that this happens to all children, even if they are not distressed at leaving them. This situation does little to build on children's enthusiasm for learning, establish routines in the nursery to take children forward in all the areas of experience or enable children to complete creative tasks. Parents enter the nursery to collect their children at varied times and so the sessions do not have clear finish times. Currently there are 44 vacant places in the nursery. The school follows the local authority admissions policy. This states that children transfer to the reception class in the September or January after their fourth birthday.

Personal, social and emotional development

91. Children in reception are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of the curriculum at the end of the reception year. This has much to do with the skills and attitudes children bring with them from home. In reception and nursery, children are respectful to adults and follow teachers' instructions correctly. The children play happily alongside each other and help each other put on an apron or to do a jigsaw puzzle. In the nursery, children soon learn to change their clothes for physical education lessons independently.
92. Teaching is better in reception than in the nursery in this area of the curriculum. Important opportunities to enable children to develop social skills are lost in the nursery. In reception, children sit in small groups to enjoy a drink and a short discussion during the morning. Children take it in turns to be responsible for serving each other the drink and learn good manners by saying *please* and *thank you*. Such opportunities in the nursery are missed when children sit individually with an adult who serves them a drink. They finish it quickly before another child is directed to have their drink. In the nursery and reception, children are often directed to the activities they are to undertake. Children remain at these activities until directed by the teacher to others. This reduces opportunities for them to make important decisions about their work.

Communication, language and literacy

93. Few children are on course to meet the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. This is because teaching is mostly unsatisfactory in this area of the curriculum. Children are not challenged sufficiently to use their developing written and spoken English literacy skills. Teachers' aspirations for the children are too low, especially in the nursery. This hinders children's progress significantly.

94. Many children in the Foundation Stage have English as an additional language. Some of the children are bi-lingual, even tri-lingual. Children at an early stage of learning English, spend time listening, although they can often understand much of what they hear. This is reflected in the nursery, where children play alongside, rather than with their peers, but follow the instructions of an adult. They are confident to talk to the learning support assistant in their own language. Children in reception have gained more confidence in speaking English and talk eagerly to their friends and adults about their work.
95. In the nursery and reception, children listen attentively to the stories told to them clearly by their teachers. They like to share books with their friends and other adults. However, teachers make few links between the words children speak and how they appear in writing. There are few opportunities for children to learn well the correct way to form their letters and learn the names and the sounds they make. The environment, especially in the nursery, lacks examples for children to copy. Teachers do not provide a variety of writing in the children's home languages as well as in English, including books, notices and labels. It is only in recent months that some children can listen to tapes of stories in their home languages. Most stories come from traditional English tales and are not always appropriate for children from different cultures. Generally, adults in the Foundation Stage give little time to developing spoken English skills so that the children can apply them correctly in a range of situations and make the most of their time, especially in the nursery.
96. Assessments when children first start in the nursery and reception classes do not take into account the fact that some children start school able to read. While books are available for children to take home to share with parents, there are few dual language books and few opportunities for children to read to their parents and or an adult in school on a regular basis. This slows the progress of children who have already begun to learn to read and those making their first steps towards literacy.

Mathematical development

97. Children's mathematical development is also well below that expected for children at the end of the reception year. Teaching in this aspect is mostly unsatisfactory. It is better in reception when children learn to count through number rhymes. Some children count confidently up to 10. In one good session, children learned about two and three-dimensional shapes by feeling the shapes of various boxes. They discussed the properties and shape of each box and repeated the teacher's words for the correct name of the shape.
98. There are fewer opportunities for children to learn mathematical skills in the nursery. While children were encouraged to set up a baker's shop and buy items with toy money, they were not really clear about what they were learning. Some children cut out and pasted triangles, squares and circles to stick on to larger versions of the same shape, but interactions with adults were insufficient to take learning forward at a fast rate. No links were made with numbers in the children's own languages. A further weakness in the teaching is the lack of direct teaching of what numbers look like and how they can be written correctly. In reception, this limits opportunities for children to show what they have learned and feel proud.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

99. Few children are on course to reach the early learning goals at the end of the reception year as this area is not taught well enough, especially in the nursery.
100. Children are taught through many first hand experiences. In the nursery, the children play in the garden, digging in the mud and play with wet and dry sand and water. In this way they find out about the properties of such materials and use their imagination. Children do some cooking and learn about the need for hygiene and the application of some mathematical skills. The children gain some idea of time passing by looking at photographs of themselves as babies and talking about how they have changed. They also look at photographs of past events in the nursery and try to recall them. However, there are no opportunities for children to learn by using computers to enhance their skills in literacy and numeracy or find out about the world. It is the school's policy that children should not use computers in the nursery as they are seen as toys. The important role computers can play in enabling children, especially those with English as an additional language or special educational needs to make rapid progress have been ignored. There are few opportunities within the nursery for children to find out things by looking through magnifying glasses, making things by joining materials or raise questions from stimulating displays.
101. Teaching is better in reception, especially when children were exploring what would happen as they blew bubbles. This helped them to learn in a fun way and gain a sense of awe and wonder. Children in reception make models with recyclable materials and learn how to join materials with glue and sticky tape. They explore the world around them when taken to nearby places of interest.

Physical development

102. Children are on course to meet and possibly exceed the early learning goals in physical development. This is taught well in reception, where children take responsibility for putting out the apparatus they need. Children climb and balance well. They show imagination, for example, when asked to travel in different ways across a mat. At times they are adventurous in their movements. The teacher has high expectations of what the children can do. Children talk about what they have done confidently.
103. This aspect is also taught well in the nursery. Children can dance in response to music and wave 'flags' in various patterns and shapes to demonstrate their understanding of words such as *high, low, up, down, beside*. In addition they cooperate well when playing with a 'parachute' to enhance coordination and teamwork. In another lesson, children jumped in and out of hoops lightly, bowled the hoops along, showing good coordination and balanced well on one leg. The children listened carefully to the instructions and responded appropriately to the teacher's questions. On larger apparatus in the nursery 'shelter', children climb, balance and crawl through tunnels carefully, often using their imagination to turn the apparatus into trains or busses.

Creative development

104. Children's creativity is well below that which is expected at this age. Throughout the Foundation Stage the environment does not encourage children's curiosity. Materials

and experiences, including music, do not reflect a range of cultures, beliefs and traditions. A multi-cultural day was held in the summer 2001 but this was the first of such occasions. The opportunities for children to act out 'real-life' situations, such as in a shop or their home lack quality as they are not planned carefully enough. Teaching is unsatisfactory as teachers are unclear about what children are to achieve from the activities. Resources are old, out of date and do not reflect the community in which the school is situated.

105. In art work, children may choose the paper they are to use, but opportunities to explore the effects of different kinds of brushes and mixing paints are limited when resources are fully prepared.

ENGLISH

106. The previous inspection in 1998 found overall attainment in English was below average. Since then, the school's annual National Curriculum test results in reading and writing for children aged seven have been well below average. The latest results in 2001 were very low and within the range of the lowest five per cent of schools across the country. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of children's work during the present inspection, show that overall standards at the end of the infant stage are well below average. This represents a fall in standards since the previous inspection. The school has a high number of children with English as an additional language. It has made some progress recently in meeting this challenge, but its programme of literacy work is not always diverse enough for the needs of these children.

107. A key issue identified in the previous inspection was to increase the teaching time for literacy. This has been done through the satisfactory introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers show a sound understanding of the literacy hour, but do not always implement it successfully enough to help raise standards. Scrutiny of children's work shows that their learning over time is often unsatisfactory. Brighter children are usually challenged and extended enough, but most other children do not always make the progress they should. For the past five years girls have outperformed boys in national tests on every occasion but one. The school is aware of this situation, but has not yet done enough to analyse the reasons for it. The overall learning of children with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This is because the work they do in lessons is not always matched sufficiently well to targets set in their individual education plans.

108. Children's speaking and listening skills are below that expected for their age, although there were some good examples of them contributing well in whole class discussions. The school is currently focusing on the development of speaking and listening skills and this is paying dividends. Children begin oral sessions by listening attentively and they respond well to prompts and encouragement, although some become restless and find it difficult to concentrate. Most children respond correctly to

instructions, such as in physical education lessons. Their answers to questions show they have listened carefully to what is being asked. They put their hands up quickly, although some are shy to put their own ideas forward. By the age of seven their confidence has increased, although they seldom ask questions of their own or offer opinions. An example of a lesson in which speaking and listening skills were developed well was seen when Year 1 children considered the difference between story and information books. The teacher used a collection of books effectively to draw out the distinctions from the children.

109. Children enjoy reading and handling books, but their reading skills are well below that expected for their age and this hinders progress in other subjects. Many children read haltingly and with little expression. However, they often make use of letter sounds and other strategies to read unfamiliar words and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. Most are able to retell simple stories accurately and to identify the main characters, but few are able to predict story outcomes and to put forward plausible alternatives. Children know that books have titles and are written by authors, but very few are clear about their favourite stories or have a knowledge of particular authors. Although most children claim to read regularly at home, the school is discontinuing the use of home/school diaries in favour of reading record sheets that the teacher completes. This makes the on-going dialogue between parent, teacher and child more difficult. The school does not have enough reading books, particularly for older children. Lack of space means there is no specific library area and this impedes opportunities for children to develop research skills.
110. Many children have considerable difficulty with writing and, at age seven, standards in this area of work are low. This has a significant impact on the progress children are able to make in other subjects. The school is aware of the problem and the development of writing skills is one of its priorities. Most children show a growing understanding of how to sequence events in the right order. However, their knowledge of basic sentence structure, including the use of full stops and capital letters, is developing only slowly. Most children's writing lacks imagination and too little is accomplished in the time available. Simple spellings are often incorrect and few examples were seen of children using word lists or dictionaries to support their work. Children try hard to improve their handwriting skills, but letters are often poorly formed and work is sometimes untidy. Writing skills taught within the literacy lessons are not always reinforced sufficiently in other subjects. Increased use is being made of computers to develop children's literacy skills, but more could still be done in this area of work.
111. Most of the teaching seen was satisfactory, but there was also unsatisfactory as well as good teaching. The structure provided by the literacy hour is helping to give teachers clear guidelines about the organisation of lessons. Resources are prepared carefully and lesson plans are usually clear about what children are to learn and how. Most children have good attitudes towards the subject and behave really well. The best teaching stems from:
- good relationships and an expectation that children will work hard;

- good control and management, including the use of praise and encouragement to motivate children;
 - a clear understanding of the National Literacy Strategy objectives;
 - well organised group work with tasks pitched at an appropriate level for the children, including those with English as an additional language;
 - skilful use of questions that challenge children to think hard;
 - appropriate emphasis on basic skills, such as the teaching of phonics.
112. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs when tasks are not matched sufficiently well to the needs of the children and they do not make enough progress. This is particularly so for those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

MATHEMATICS

113. Observations in lessons and the scrutiny of work indicate that standards in mathematics are well below those found nationally for children aged seven. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection when they were judged to be below those which are typical for children of this age.
114. In the 2001 national tests at age seven, results were very low, having dropped from well below average. The school does very poorly in relation to other schools with children from similar backgrounds. There are few children who reach higher levels of achievement.
115. During the inspection children demonstrated their ability to count to 50 in fives and tens. In Year 2, children can count in twos to 20. In Year 1, children recognise the value of coins and can do simple addition and take away sums. Bright children quickly worked out several different combinations of coins to make 10p. Time was wasted when they had to wait to have their work checked by an adult. The task was too easy for them. Information and communication technology was used in Year 1 during the inspection to enhance learning in mathematics, but this does not happen often. The children entered information about the clothes they wore on different days of the week into a database. They then used the information to make a graph.
116. Parents have lost confidence in the school because of poor results. The school has yet to analyse test results in order to identify priorities for further development and so improve standards. As a result, teachers are unable to help children make faster progress as they move through the school. As children are coming in and out of the school frequently, some have considerable gaps in their knowledge and skills. The school has done little to address this. Although there are a considerable number of children with English as an additional language the school does not do enough to promote children's spoken and written skills in mathematics. There are few children on the special needs register identified as having difficulties in mathematics.
117. Children do not do as well as they should because teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not:
- take into account children's different needs;
 - make links between spoken and written language;
 - plan lessons sharply enough so that they know what children are to achieve;
 - assess children well enough to plan the next lesson appropriately;
 - expect children to record what they have learned;
 - show children how to write their numbers correctly soon enough;

- challenge children to think hard about what they are doing.
118. Children's attitudes towards learning mathematics are good and do not hinder their learning. Children behave well so that teachers can work with other children without interruption. Children cooperate with others well and learn from each other. They play games well, taking it in turns.
 119. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented, as almost all lessons, have an oral introduction, followed by group activities and a plenary when teachers go over what the children have done. During the inspection, children were not seen recording their learning. The scrutiny of work showed very little work had been covered since the beginning of term. This hinders the opportunities for children, especially in Year 2 to do well in national tests. Children are not used to writing down their answers, which would help them link the spoken word and written meaning. Where children do record their work, it is not systematically marked so they do not know how well they are achieving. Nor do they receive effective guidance on how to correct their mistakes. Homework tasks are not given on a regular basis to enhance their progress.
 120. Although the National Numeracy Strategy is in place, it is yet to have a significant impact on standards. This is partly because good mental and oral sessions at the beginning of each lesson to stimulate children's oral English and mathematical skills have not been implemented effectively. In other instances, teachers spend too much time talking rather than encouraging individuals or groups to try and explain the way they can work out the answers to mathematical problems.
 121. The lack of attention to enabling children to achieve well in literacy skills in English also holds back progress. For example, one group of children was set a task to play a game involving the addition and subtraction of money. The children did not know how to play the game, nor could they read the instructions on the game. As the teacher spent time with another group, these children did not make any progress in that part of the lesson.
 122. Where there is additional support in lessons, such as that for children with statements or special educational needs, children's progress is still unsatisfactory. Teachers do not always communicate well enough the task learning support assistants are to supervise. As a result the learning support assistant is unclear about what the children are to achieve.
 123. The coordinator has a clear view about what needs to be done to improve, but overall leadership is unsatisfactory as too little has been done to raise standards. The coordinator does not have sufficient information about test results or the way mathematics is being taught to bring about changes.

SCIENCE

124. Children make steady progress in learning science through Years 1 and 2, but by the time they leave the school their achievements are still below those expected nationally for children of this age. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Standards would be higher if able children were better challenged by their lessons.
125. The assessments, which form part of the annual national assessment programme, indicate that far fewer children than in most schools reach the national average

standard. They also indicate that standards are well below average when compared to schools with children from similar backgrounds. The evidence of the inspection is that children's achievements, while below average, are better than the national assessments suggest. This is because the extent of science knowledge and understanding in some children is masked by the difficulties they have in discussing or recording their work.

126. Both girls and boys take a full part in science lessons. The inspection found no evidence that one group regularly achieved better results than the other in science. However, girls do better than boys in both English and mathematics and the school does not conduct the checks necessary to make sure neither group is disadvantaged in science. Children with special educational needs progress smoothly in science because they have the extra support and help from teachers to enable them to take a full part in lessons. Some children absorb science ideas quickly and lessons are sometimes too easy for them. When this happens they do not progress as well as they should.
127. The children's science work covers all the required areas of study in the National Curriculum. In three of these areas, science enquiry, learning about materials and learning about life processes, progress is steady. There was no evidence to indicate children's achievements in the fourth area, learning about forces. By the end of Year 2, most children can distinguish man-made from natural materials and explain how different materials are used. They have tested a range of materials for waterproofing and understand why some are used in the manufacture of winter clothing while others are not. They can identify a range of different species of insects and other small creatures living locally and explain, for example, how ladybirds and snails move, feed and seek shelter. They have conducted simple tests, observed the results and recorded them correctly.
128. The standard of science teaching is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses needing to be addressed. Overall, the quality of teaching is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Work during the inspection was carefully planned and teachers did their best to enrich children's language skills through the use of correct terminology and good questioning. Lessons interest the children, with the effect that they concentrate well and learn effectively. Visits to outside locations, such as, South Weald Park, help make science real for the children. However, lessons do not set a hard enough challenge for some of them and plans for lessons do not include activities for children who learn more quickly than others. In one otherwise satisfactory lesson, children were learning about what makes bread rise. They had small plastic bottles of different ingredients, including one with water and yeast. They attached balloons to the

tops of the bottles and saw how released gas inflated the balloon. While the lesson gave children the opportunity to predict what might happen, to observe the outcomes and to record them, it did not ask enough of the more able children. Several showed themselves quite capable of suggesting experiments of their own, to show for example whether water temperature had any effect on the action of the yeast. The lesson set too low a ceiling for these children.

129. On occasions in some science lessons, small groups of children are left to play with apparatus or materials while the teacher works intensively with the rest of the class. This activity is unproductive and should be stopped. The school's new computer facilities are hardly used at all in the science programme and this represents a lost opportunity to extend children's learning.
130. As in the last inspection, children are keen on their science work, behave well in lessons and use equipment carefully and safely. They work well in groups and talk excitedly about what they discover.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

131. Four lessons were observed during the period of the inspection, two each in Years 1 and 2. Judgements were also informed by scrutiny of children's work, an examination of teachers' planning and interviews with the subject coordinators. As in the previous inspection, some examples of good art work were seen. The programme of activities for the subject is often lively and interesting. Overall, however, children's achievements at age seven are typical of those expected nationally. The last inspection judged attainment in art at the end of the infant stage to be above that expected nationally. In spite of the coordinators efforts, a gloomier picture emerges in design and technology. Very little work was available to be seen and, at age seven, children's achievements in the subject are below the levels expected. At the time of the last inspection, they were judged to be satisfactory.
132. Children show satisfactory skills in drawing, painting and colouring to illustrate work across the curriculum, for example in science studies about minibeasts and food. Their art work also includes weaving, collage, clay work and the making of simple computerised pictures. As they move up through the school, their observational skills improve and they show growing confidence in using a range of media to communicate what they see. An example of this was when Year 2 children looked closely at fruits and then selected paints, pencils or pastels to produce pictures of what they had observed. They worked quickly and the pleasing results showed an awareness of colour, form, pattern and line.
133. Children also show an increasing ability to use their imagination when making pictures. For example, Year 2 children learned about the story of Rama and Sita and then painted a series of pictures to represent what they had heard. The results were very striking and show the ability to explore ideas and to mix and apply paint successfully. As at the time of the previous inspection, appropriate attention is given to the study of the work of well-known artists. Year 1 children have considered the work of Monet and produced good pictures in a similar style. Such studies help children to be more aware of the ways in which different artists represent what they see and feel.
134. The design and technology programme of work is limited and there are almost no examples of what the children have made around the school, particularly products with moving parts. In addition, there is little photographic evidence of what they have made in the past. In the lessons seen, children show enthusiasm and handle equipment and

materials with growing confidence. They cut, bend, fold and glue materials, but often with not enough care. Few opportunities are provided for them to investigate and evaluate a range of familiar products. They seldom try out ideas first by using construction kits, card or sheet plastic. Children are usually aware of the purpose for which a product is made, but have little concept of why one material is better suited to a job than another. There is little evidence to show that they really understand the importance of adapting and refining what they make in order to bring about improvements. Teachers have produced evaluation sheets for the children to record the process of making a product, but lack of writing skills makes it difficult for many of them to do this effectively.

135. The teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to good. Teachers prepare lessons well and ensure that appropriate resources are to hand. This helps see that time is used effectively. There are clear explanations of what is to be done and this helps strengthen children's confidence and has a positive impact on their progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they manage the activities well. Where teaching is good, the emphasis is rightly on creative development and on building skills in a systematic way. This was seen in the Year 2 lesson in which children used pastels, paints and pencils to create images of fruit they were observing. The teacher had high expectations of what children can achieve and demonstrated successfully how to hold the pastels and to smudge colours. She also reminded children about shading with a pencil and showed them how to blend different coloured paints so as to soften lines in their picture. The children responded by trying out these techniques, often with pleasing results. They have good attitudes towards their work and behave really well. Weaknesses in teaching occur when tasks are not matched well to the abilities of the children and there is insufficient focus on helping groups acquire the skills being taught. As a result some children become dissatisfied with the outcomes.
136. Displays of art work observed around the school during the inspection were of a good standard. This helped build children's visual awareness and encourages their creative development.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

137. One lesson was observed in geography and none were observed in history during the inspection. Scrutiny of children's work, classroom displays, photographs and teachers' planning shows that children do not make the progress they should in either of these subjects. Standards are below those normally found for children of this age in history and geography. This represents a decline in geography since the last inspection. Standards have not changed in history as they were below those found in other schools nationally in 1998. Teachers do not give enough attention to helping children with English as an additional language to make the progress they should.
138. The school places most of its emphasis on teaching geography through visits to places of interest, such as to Epping Forest and South Weald Country Park. Recent work in Year 2 has covered making plans of the school so that children can find their way around it. This has been linked to aerial photographs of the area and an ordinance survey map. Children have also thought about the weather and the effect it

has on the clothes we wear and on nature. Children's work shows they know about the seasons, such as autumn, when leaves fall from the trees and days are shorter than in summer. In Year 1, children have covered similar work as well as learning about the different flowers and creatures that can be found in a country park. These tasks show low expectations, as teachers in Year 2 are not yet enabling children to use appropriate geographical vocabulary, compare their locality with places further away or make observations about the features that give a place its character.

139. The situation is similar in history, as children in Year 2 have visited the 'Ragged School' in Mile End. During the visit, they learned what it was like to go to school in Victorian Times. Children in Year 1 and Year 2 have recorded some of their past experiences, such as 'I went to a party' or descriptions of events that take place during the day. This helps children understand how time passes. Recent work in Year 2 shows that children have compared a Victorian kitchen with those often found in homes at the present time. In Year 2, there is little evidence to show that children are beginning to recognise that there are reasons why people in the past acted in the way that they did. The shortage of artefacts makes it difficult for the children to observe or handle sources of information to answer questions about the past on the basis of simple observations.
140. It was not possible to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching or children's attitudes towards these subjects during the inspection. However, the scrutiny of work indicates that teaching over time is unsatisfactory. The curriculum for both subjects is not broad enough and remains centred on children's experiences and visits within the locality.
141. There are policies and schemes of work for teaching each of these subjects, but they have not been implemented sufficiently to enable children to achieve well. The last inspection criticised the school for studying these subjects briefly so that children did not make sufficient progress. The situation is still the same. Similarly, teachers assess the work children have covered, not their level of understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards in information and communication technology are below those normally expected for children of this age which represents a decline since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. This is because the subject has not been taught often enough over time.
143. In the scrutiny of work, there were few examples of children using the computer for word processing or to enhance their skills in English as an additional language. There were examples of them using creative art programs and some data handling programs to make graphs. Generally, the children can use the mouse effectively to control the screen cursor and save and print their work. Year 2 children were observed using a drawing program confidently to illustrate a visit to Epping Forest. Others in the same year group, word-processed simple sentences using full stops and capital letters. These were not always inserted in the correct place in the sentence. A few children were observed working on computers independently during the inspection. This was during a cycle of group activities linked to art in Year 1.
144. Three lessons in information and communication technology were observed. All were taught in the new computer suite, two by the information and communication

technology coordinator accompanied by the class teacher. All lessons observed were satisfactory as teachers' knowledge for the tasks was sufficient to enable children to make progress. Children were taught particular skills to use a computer program correctly. However, the number of computers in the computer suite is not enough to enable all children to listen to the teacher and apply new skills immediately.

145. The class is separated into groups. One group sit in front of the teacher who demonstrates what children are to do on one of the computers. Teachers rely on children's good attitudes, very good listening and observational skills to help them to make progress. After a short explanation the children work together in pairs to carry out the task they have been shown. Most children apply themselves and do their best to complete the task without additional help. They work cooperatively when asked to do so. Such positive attitudes do much to enhance children's skills in information and communication technology. Much of the explanation is technical and children with English as an additional language have to be particularly attentive as little is done to make this easy for them.
146. On these occasions, the remainder of the class completes other tasks linked to games of logic and then take their turn on the computer as other children finish. The opportunity to have groups of children working on control technology, using the school's programmable toys is lost.
147. The computer system is new and represents a complete change of resources. There is insufficient software and teachers' knowledge has not kept up to date. Teachers are undergoing training through a national initiative. There is no clear scheme of work for information and communication technology and links with current national guidance are unclear. There is no assessment system to check what children have learned so they can build on their skills year by year as they move through the school.
148. Resources in terms of the number of computers, has improved since the last inspection. There is now one computer for every eleven pupils in Years 1 and 2, but there is still a significant lack of software to enhance progress in all subjects. As at the time of the last inspection, information and communication technology is not used often enough to help children acquire literacy skills.

MUSIC

149. Standards in music are similar to those found in all schools nationally. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection. Children sing tunefully, learn new songs quickly and clap in rhythm. They use instruments effectively to create a beat and are able to change and control the tone and volume of their playing effectively. Some children learn to play the cello, but this was not observed during the inspection.
150. Children listen attentively to and appreciate a variety of music as they enter and leave assembly. However, they do not often evaluate their work or that of others so that they know how to improve. This is in part because teachers do not expect children to explain their ideas well enough in English. Children enjoy their music lessons, listen attentively and do their best. There are few opportunities for them to explore and enjoy music from a variety of cultures and periods of history. Too little consideration is given

to celebrating the richness of the music from the community in which the school is situated.

151. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory. Tasks were appropriate for the children's ages. One lesson, which involved using instruments to illustrate a story, was imaginative and caught the children's interest. Children learn about beat and rhythm through playing games and accompanying familiar songs with instruments. However, learning support assistants were not deployed effectively. They watched while teachers taught the lesson. Lesson plans did not include many opportunities for children to compose and perform ideas of their own.
152. The system for assessing children's work does not give enough guidance to teachers to help them plan lessons which meet children's needs so that they can make faster progress. Lessons are not always planned carefully enough with clear objectives for children to learn so that skills are built on at a good rate. The coordinator has received no time free from class responsibilities to check on the quality of teaching and learning. It is difficult for the coordinator to influence and improve teaching and learning across the school. Resources are adequate, but do not contain many instruments or music from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Two gymnastics and one games lesson were seen during the period of the inspection. An examination of the school's records and discussion with the coordinator for the subject show that dance is also part of the annual programme of work. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, acquire skills at a steady rate and by the age of seven most have reached levels of achievement expected for their age. The previous inspection judged attainment to be good.
154. All children wear appropriate clothing for lessons and good routines have been established to move quickly and quietly to and from the hall. Children behave sensibly when setting out and putting away apparatus and equipment. Particular attention is paid to safety factors and the children are aware of its importance. Lessons include warm-up and cool-down activities that are carried out effectively.
155. Children sustain activity well, sometimes out of breath through effort. They show satisfactory awareness of space and of the needs of others. Many show increasing confidence when climbing and jumping from apparatus. Their balance and co-ordination is often good and some children are really adventurous in the tasks they set themselves. They successfully explore jumping, twisting, turning and rolling. They try hard to improve and are beginning to think about how to land correctly and how to link movements. Examples of this were seen in a Year 1 lesson during which children jumped from apparatus, landed on a mat and moved straight into a roll. In games, children are learning the skills of passing and receiving a ball. Many older children are starting to hold bats and hockey sticks correctly. They keep an eye on the ball and try to move into position quickly. In simple games, they show a growing awareness of teamwork and the need for fair play.
156. In two of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory and in the third it was good. Activities are planned carefully and resources are prepared well. This helps to

ensure that time is not wasted. Considerable care is rightly taken over safety, especially when apparatus is in use. Relationships are good and praise and encouragement are used effectively to help build children's confidence. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and sometimes demonstrate movements to the class so children know how to improve. At other times children are used successfully to demonstrate particular skills, such as throwing and catching a ball. In the good lesson, children were offered opportunities to try out a range of challenging movements on the apparatus, which many of them did. The activities built well on previous learning and were moved forward with good pace and a sense of purpose. All children have very good attitudes towards their work and behave really well. They concentrate hard, show pride in their efforts and are pleased when others are successful.

157. A sports day is held each summer term. The emphasis is on enjoyment rather than competition and all children take part.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. Religious education makes a positive contribution to the school's curriculum. In the lessons observed it was taught with vigour and enthusiasm and as a result children's achievements are in line with those expected for this age. The local syllabus is being revised and the school is rightly using early drafts of the new material, together with some elements of the earlier programme. Attainment at present is not as high as at the last inspection, when it was above the level expected in the syllabus used at that time.
159. Many children do not have the reading and writing skills to discuss religious ideas confidently, to use books for simple research and to record their ideas in a written form. However, there is compensation in the fact that many come from homes with a practising faith.
160. Children can describe important celebrations, such as birthdays, in their own lives and they have considered the places which have a special importance to them. They know they belong to groups such as a family, a school, or a team and that such groups have common purposes, loyalties, values and beliefs. From this foundation of understanding they appreciate that religions are faith groups held together by common beliefs. They know that people of different faiths have special places of worship and special days for celebration.
161. The teaching of religious education observed during the inspection was good. Teachers who were seen, know the subject well and in some cases teach from their own faith experience. They use objects, pictures and stories to help explain the points they make and to capture the children's interest. They lead class discussions well, drawing out shy children and encouraging full comments and ideas rather than single word answers. The lesson content is accessible to all the children, yet challenging enough to tax the more able. One lesson was about the 5Ks of Sikhism. The teacher was herself a Sikh and she brought expert knowledge to the subject. With the help of objects and pictures she had brought from home, she explained these complex ideas very effectively. She moved on to explain Sikh naming customs and why hair should not be cut. She amazed the children by unfolding and retying a Sikh turban some five metres long. The lesson was very engaging and the children concentrated very well. As a result, they learned a lot in a short time.

162. Occasionally, teachers try to cover too much ground too quickly in a lesson. Some important points are missed and some children become confused.
163. Children participate very well in religious education lessons observed. They enjoy discussions and try hard to put their points of view clearly. Even when language is a struggle for them, they are confident to put their hands up. They behave well and listen courteously to each other and the teacher. They are interested and reverent in learning about values, beliefs and practices different from their own.