

INSPECTION REPORT

NORBURY FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Harrow, Middlesex

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102222

Acting Headteacher: Ms M Chambers

Lead inspector: Mr R Passant

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 June 2004

Inspection number: 265754

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and middle with nursery
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 12 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 392

School address: Welldon Crescent
Harrow
Middlesex
Postcode: HA1 1QQ

Telephone number: 020 8863 8769
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr A Nurse

Date of previous inspection: 9 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 392 pupils on roll, including 21 full-time equivalent in the nursery and 50 in Year 7. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is bigger than other primary schools. The percentage eligible for free school meals is well above the national average (52.1 per cent). The percentage of pupils whose first language is not or is believed not to be English is very high (68 per cent). The school has a very diverse ethnic population: Asian, Black-African, Indian and UK heritage pupils form the largest groups. The school has 44 refugees and asylum seekers. There are 11 Traveller pupils. There are 59 pupils (15 per cent), who are at an early stage of language acquisition. Farsi, Urdu, and Tamil are the most common first language. The ethnic minority achievement grant supports 189 pupils. The percentage of pupils with identified special educational needs is well above the national average. There are 183 on the register of special educational needs. (46.68 per cent) There are five pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. Turbulence, that is the numbers joining or leaving the school at various points in the school year, is relatively high, although it is slowing down. There is significant turbulence between Year 6 and Year 7. Many pupils have very low levels of literacy skills when they join the school.

The school is currently led by the acting headteacher who took up the position when the headteacher went on long-term sick leave in the autumn term. A headteacher has been appointed to join the school in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2728	Rod Passant	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Art and design Citizenship Information and communication technology Physical education
14214	Gillian Smith	Lay inspector	
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History
3855	David Langton	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Norbury School is a good school with many very good features. Pupils achieve well and a significant number, particularly those in school for some length of time, achieve very well. Standards in National Curriculum tests in 2003 were in line with the national average when results are adjusted for refugee pupils. Standards are well above average compared with similar schools. The overall value that the school adds is very high, in the top five per cent of schools nationally and when compared with similar schools, although the changing school population makes this more problematic to measure accurately. The school is very inclusive and meets the wide range of pupils needs well. It has a powerful ethos: the very good relationships that exist transcend heritage and culture, bind the school together and are a strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning are very good. Teaching is good. In the sample of lessons seen, it was often very good and sometimes excellent. The consistency of good quality teaching leads to good achievement. The quality of relationships among the adults working in the school and the pupils underpins the good learning. All members of staff work very hard on behalf of pupils. They want them to do well and pupils in turn want to please their teachers. What is taught is interesting and the school is very caring. These strong features of the school have been developed through very good governance, and good leadership and management in the past upon which the acting headteacher has continued to build. She has led the school well through a very difficult period. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The provision for pupils with additional needs is very good.
- Teaching is good, often very good and sometimes excellent.
- The curriculum is good and the opportunities for enrichment very good. Excellent use is made of the community and its resources to extend learning opportunities.
- Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and across the school by key staff are good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, the fostering of confidence and self-esteem are very good; the supportive and caring ethos is a key feature of pupils' achievement.
- Assessment has improved significantly but assessment and marking procedures need to be more consistent to inform the processes of individual target-setting and ensuring that pupils know what it is that they have to do in order to improve.
- There is a need to increase the opportunities for extended writing in all subjects
- The achievement and standard of work of Year 7 pupils are satisfactory. The challenge for the school is to ensure that expectations and demands made on Year 7 pupils provide every opportunity to extend their achievement further.
- Raise the status of religious education. (RE)

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved and there has been very significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The provision for ICT and for assessment has also improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, pupils achieve well. A significant number, particularly those pupils who have been at the school over a period of years, achieve very well. Although standards are below the national average, by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well. Standards seen are, overall, well below average because many pupils start school with low literacy skills which limit attainment. In subjects that are less dependent on literacy skills standards are in line with expectations. Many pupils who have English as an additional language are going through a process of absorbing language during this time and they make good progress in subsequent years.

By Year 6 the standard of work seen is below average in English, mathematics and science because of the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, or English as an additional language, and the significant turbulence of pupils joining the school, often relatively late in their primary school careers. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with expectations, as they are in physical education and art, although in some specific projects standards are above average in art, as they are in music. The trend for improvement in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards in Year 7 are satisfactory, as is achievement.

The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good and they make good progress as a result. Traveller pupils are given good support, with the result that those pupils who attend regularly make good progress. In lessons, no difference was seen between the performance of boys and girls or different ethnic groups. Overall, higher-attaining pupils achieve well, although on occasions more could be demanded of them

Pupils behave well and their attitudes are very good. Racial harmony is excellent. **The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is very good**, reflecting the school's high priority on this aspect as a foundation for further learning. Attendance is below average, mainly due to some parents' taking extended holidays. Punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. In the sample of lessons seen, it was often very good. Teachers' encouragement and their constant valuing of pupils and the very good relationships, coupled with their skills and enthusiasm, are key ingredients. The curriculum is good and enriched very well by the use of the community and its resources and clubs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, governance is very good. The very good improvements since the last inspection have been achieved through good leadership of the previous headteacher, upon which the acting headteacher has continued to build. The acting headteacher has steered the school through a difficult period well. **Leadership by key staff is good. Management is good.** Performance management and financial management are very good. The office is managed very effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed with the statement that their child liked school, was making good progress and that they felt comfortable about approaching the school. Overall, links with parents are good. Pupils feel that they are listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the consistent use of assessment to inform individual and group target-setting, to monitor progress of specific pupil groups and ensure that pupils know what they have to do in order to improve their work.
- Increase the opportunities for extended writing in subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that Year 7 pupils are challenged to achieve well by the nature and demands of the curriculum and how it is taught – extending, for example, the amount of specialist teaching that they receive.

- Review the balance of time given to RE and personal, social and health education and raise the status of RE.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The Standard of work seen is below average but pupils make good progress and achieve well. Lack of literacy skills limit overall attainment. Standards in the 2003 Year 6 tests were average when due allowance is made for refugee pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 tests are improving at the same rate as seen nationally.
- The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, along with the turnover of pupils, limits attainment.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Those who attend the school for a significant period achieve very well.
- Although turnover of pupils makes judgements about the relative progress from Year 2 to Year 6 difficult, the value that the school adds is in the top five per cent of schools.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress from a very low start. By the end of the Reception year, they reach the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Many children are in the early stages of learning English, and this inhibits their progress in achieving the goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
2. Standards in National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are well below the national average. This is clearly linked to the number of pupils who have low literacy skills. Overall, the results are depressed by language factors; the results are not a fair reflection of the capability of the pupils. They achieve well in lessons because of the quality of teaching and support they receive. This is more obviously seen in subjects of the curriculum that are not so dependent on literacy skills. Standards in art, music physical education and, as far as it was possible to judge, in design and technology, are broadly what you would expect for the age group. Pupils develop ICT expertise appropriate to their age group. Pupils listen well and many are at a receptive stage of absorbing language. There is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls, or in the performance of specific ethnic heritage groups. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils gaining the higher level 3 in the tests is broadly similar in reading and writing, but only half as many gain the higher level in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.9 (11.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.6 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

¹ The average point score is a fairer method of determining standards because it takes into account the performance of all pupils, not simply those attaining a particular threshold. It is determined by giving each National Curriculum level a numerical value, determining a total for the cohort taking the tests and then dividing it by the number of pupils in the cohort.

3. Standards in the 2003 National Curriculum Year 6 tests were below average and, when averaged out over three years, standards were well below average. Overall, standards in 2003 were well above average when compared with similar schools—that is schools in which pupils had scored similar results in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests some four years earlier. When the results are adjusted to exclude refugee pupils, overall standards were in line with the national average. Standards in the tests are improving at a rate broadly in line with the national trend. Overall, standards seen in class are below average. This reflects the high number of pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language, and the numbers joining and leaving the school at various points in the school year. A significant number of pupils joining often have limited English.
4. Overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils who have had a continuous educational experience at Norbury achieve very well. Turbulence makes it more difficult to compare the progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2; nevertheless, the value that the school adds is very high - in the top five per cent of schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. In lessons, there was no difference between girls' and boys' performance.
5. Standards in Year 7 are satisfactory. Some pupils join in Year 7. In 2003, a very high proportion of these new pupils either had special educational needs or had recently arrived in this country. A very significant number of Year 6 pupils, often the higher-attaining pupils, leave the school having taken the National Curriculum tests. These pupils tend to transfer to secondary schools outside the borough, entering their new secondary school in Year 7. Achievement in Year 7 is satisfactory, and they work diligently. However, because there is a different dynamic, the critical mass of higher attaining pupils is missing and, as a result, there is not quite the same zest for learning seen elsewhere in the school.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against their individual targets and their own prior attainment. This is because of the good teaching and support they receive, and of the strong desire to succeed which characterises almost all of them.
7. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also very good and these pupils make good progress as a result. Those pupils with English as an additional language who were not on the register for special educational needs, and who had been at the school for a significant period, all reached the expected Level 4 by Year 6. Part of the reason why the school achieves such high added value is the fact that that pupils with English as an additional language emerge from their receptive period of language acquisition in Key Stage 1 (which somewhat depresses these results) and are able to show their strengths, less inhibited by language concerns. Traveller pupils receive good support, but there is a clear relationship between progress and attendance. Those pupils who attend regularly make good progress.
8. Determining the relative performance of specific ethnic heritage groups is difficult because the numbers in a specific year group are very small and, therefore, subject to significant year-on-year change. It would seem that, in the National Curriculum tests in 2003, Indian, African, any other White and any other Black pupils perform above the school's average. White UK and Pakistani pupils performed just below the average for the school, as did any other Asian pupils. There have been unavoidable delays in installing software to track pupils' progress. Now that this is fully operational, the school will be in a better position to track and compare the relative performance of specific groups of pupils over time as required. In lessons, there was no difference in the performance of specific ethnic groups.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (25.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.2 (24.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

9. Pupils have good listening skills. Pupils' speaking is often hesitant because many do not have sufficient vocabulary to express what they want to say. Among older pupils, discussions in pairs and groups show judgement and maturity but lack opportunity for formal presentations. In reading, standards in Years 1 and 2 are well below national levels, although a small number of pupils read aloud fluently and expressively. When books and stories are shared, or read aloud, pupils respond enthusiastically and with understanding. When they read aloud, although reading is accurate, it can be somewhat mechanical. Pupils in older year groups usually read with understanding but few examples were seen of pupils tackling really challenging texts effectively. Standards of writing are low. In subjects other than English, there are few opportunities to write creatively and at length. Given the very low level of literacy skills when they start, the progress pupils make as they move up the school and reach average or nearly average standards in writing and in other elements of English is good. The school stresses that pupils should use correct terminology.
10. The school emphasises the learning of multiplication tables and, by the end of Year 6, even the least able pupils are able to respond to quick-fire questions at the beginning of lessons. However, pupils in the early stage of learning English need a great deal of support to apply their knowledge of the number system to practical situations. Teachers work hard to overcome such difficulties by stressing the importance of the regular use of correct mathematical vocabulary; for example, building up the language of possibility – words such as 'impossible', 'certain' and 'likely'.
11. Pupils are confident and competent in their use of ICT.
12. There are a number of factors that support pupils' good achievement. These are:
 - Consistent classroom routines.
 - Good learning because of good teaching.
 - The school builds successfully on pupils' good listening skills.
 - The school works hard to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
 - The good use of technical vocabulary.
 - Practical work and approaches and an emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to discuss and rehearse their ideas.
 - The overall quality of school leadership.
 - The relatively recent staffing stability.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is well below the national average and their punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they behave well during the school day. Pupils' good learning is underpinned by the very good relationships. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. The school has a powerful inclusive ethos.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships among pupils and with adults are very good and the level of racial harmony is excellent.
- Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes towards school.
- The school is working hard to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality but too many parents fail to ensure that their children attend regularly.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the pupils respond by behaving sensibly during lessons and at other times.
- Pupils have a very good moral and social awareness and they share an excellent understanding of one another's cultures, values and beliefs.

Commentary

13. The previous inspection found that pupils had good attitudes to learning and that they behaved well during lessons and at other times. This positive picture has at least been maintained and, indeed, pupils' attitudes have improved over the intervening six years.
14. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy coming to school and they are keen to make the most of the opportunities provided. Pupils remain very well motivated and enthusiastic as they move through the school and they particularly enjoy taking part in the various extra-curricular clubs. They are attentive during lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. Whenever they can, pupils take an active part and are very respectful of each other's opinions and points of view. Children in the Nursery form very good relationships with adults and soon adapt to routines. They interact well with one another and gradually develop the ability to share resources willingly. In the Reception classes, levels of concentration increase and children adapt well to the faster pace of lessons.
15. This school regularly reminds parents about the importance of regular and prompt attendance. Monitoring procedures have recently improved and any unexplained absences are always followed up. Pupils who have outstanding attendance receive congratulatory certificates and, each month, a cup is awarded to the class with the best attendance and another is awarded for the best punctuality, along with a small sum of money for the class to spend as it chooses. This spirit of friendly competition is proving to be very effective in improving punctuality and, although it remains well below the national average, attendance has also steadily improved over the last four years. Although the school strongly discourages parents from taking their children out of school during the school term, a significant minority continue to do so. Many of these absences are the result of extended trips overseas and family holidays and the number of these absences has increased over the last year. These prolonged absences mean that the pupils concerned miss large amounts of classwork and this could well place them at a disadvantage in the future.
16. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and, during lessons, they gently remind pupils of the importance of having good manners and showing consideration for others. As a result, the majority of pupils are very clear on how they should behave. Working relationships are very good and pupils work hard within a calm and mutually supportive atmosphere. Analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire, however, shows that around half the pupils have concerns about the general standard of behaviour. Inspectors followed this up during formal and informal discussions with pupils. Pupils were surprised and felt that this was not a fair reflection of everyday school life. Inspectors agree; pupils get on very well and there is an exceptionally high level of racial harmony. The question of bullying was raised at the parents' meeting. Eighty-four per cent of parents agreed with the statement that their child had not been harassed or subject to bullying. Certainly, bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated and pupils say that teachers deal with any such incidents very promptly. There was one permanent exclusion during the most recent school year.

17. The school recognises that pupils' personal development is fundamental and has a major impact upon their aspirations, attitudes and achievements. Many of the opportunities provided help to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school is keen to broaden the range of pupils' experiences and older pupils can go on residential trips to specialist activity centres. Pupils also reflect on social issues such as recycling and like to use their initiative. During assembly, pupils learn about social and moral themes, such as thinking before they speak and considering the feelings of others. Very good use is made of pupils' religious cultural backgrounds and they develop an excellent understanding of one another's traditions and faiths. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school's provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship education is also very good. Teachers model courtesy and respect and expect pupils to show the same respect for others. It is this fundamental level of respect that creates the school's inclusive ethos.
18. Pupils with additional needs, either relating to learning difficulties or to learning English, show positive attitudes to the school. They feel valued by teachers and teaching assistants, (TAs) and the majority try hard to please them and to meet their own agreed targets. The way in which they are totally integrated into the life of the school, and the mutual respect shown between pupils and between adults and pupils, confer a confidence that enables them to do their best.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
61	0	0
16	0	0
14	2	0
11	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
16	0	0
39	0	0
35	0	0
2	0	0
91	0	0

Black or Black British – Caribbean	13	0	0
Black or Black British – African	42	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	20	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Pupils achieve well because of the consistency of quality teaching and a good, rich curriculum which ensures that what they are taught engages pupils' interest. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good. In the sample of lessons seen, it was very often very good and occasionally excellent. One lesson seen was unsatisfactory due to a professional misjudgement about the pitch of the work. Teaching is at least good across the school and very good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the relationships and teachers' commitment to the pupils.
- The excellent inclusive ethos.
- Teachers have professional expertise and good subject expertise; classroom management and planning, use of time and resources are good.
- Teachers' very good insistence on high standards of behaviour.

Commentary

19. Pupils' learning is good. Although teaching is good in Year 7, pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils in this age-group require good teaching to keep them fully engaged. A small number of pupils who arrived at the school without proper identification papers are physically developed and have the appearance of being much older, presenting the school with the dilemma of physically and socially mature boys within a middle-school context.
20. Pupils acquire skills very well in the Foundation Stage and work well, applying themselves to the tasks. Pupils from Year 1 onwards are able to work independently and collaboratively, developing these skills as they move through the school. Above all, they develop the confidence that they can achieve well. This is the direct result of good teaching.
21. Teachers have good professional skills. They plan well to meet the diverse needs in class. Higher-attaining pupils and pupils with additional needs are identified, and support and extension activities are planned. In some cases, more could be expected of the higher-attaining pupils by challenging them to go on to the more challenging tasks without first undertaking the core activity. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and make effective use of time. Provision for homework is satisfactory. Teaching Assistants (TAs) make, overall, a good contribution to pupils' learning but could be more involved in the planning.
22. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and the Reception classes is very good, overall. The TAs play a valuable role in the teaching programme, and all staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children. Stimulating activities are planned and prepared effectively to extend and enhance children's learning. In the Reception class, the

teachers introduce literacy and numeracy lessons gradually so that most pupils are ready for the faster pace in Year 1. Regular day-to-day assessments are used well to prepare appropriate work for pupils.

23. These generic teaching skills are given specific additional weight by factors more unique to the school. Teachers are good role models. Their diversity of background is a strength. Although a significant number are technically unqualified in this country, they are all trained and experienced in their home country. Although they have had to adjust to the demands of the National Curriculum, they bring an enthusiasm and energy to their work and a commitment to equality of opportunity, and promote an excellent ethos of inclusion. All teachers share a properly professional but, nevertheless, emotional commitment to the pupils: they want them to succeed. A particular strength is the constant valuing of individuals that takes place. Teachers are punctilious in the way that they make pupils feel valued; questions are asked of individuals and not just floated across the classroom; thanks are given to individuals; in corridors teachers find a kind, encouraging word, often to pupils not in their class. They work hard to foster pupils' sense of self-esteem and to generate a positive, secure ethos in which pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, confident that they will not be ridiculed either by their classmates or the teachers. Teachers develop good opportunities for speaking and listening activities – they allow pupils time to share and rehearse their ideas. Teachers are also very good listeners – they respect what pupils have to say and give time for pupils to assemble their thoughts. Above all, there is respect for pupils that in turn builds and contributes to the school's ethos, based as it is on mutual respect.
24. Despite difficulties in implementing the latest software for recording assessment data, the school has worked hard to improve assessment procedures since the previous inspection and there are now good systems in place to assess how well pupils are achieving in English, mathematics and science. A new, practical policy has been introduced, with guidelines for teachers, and class assessment files established. Portfolios of pupils' work, with recorded levels, judged against National Curriculum criteria, are still at a developmental stage, as, too, are the pupils' records of achievement. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is a second language, is very good. Teachers make good use of referring to learning objectives known as 'WALTs' – ('We are learning to...'), and 'WILFs' – ('What I am looking for is...'), which are recorded in the recently introduced weekly Key Objective planning books kept by all teachers and are used as part of the planning assessment process.
25. The previous inspection judged the use made of assessment to be poor. This is now satisfactory, and this is a good improvement. The school is aware that arrangements for target-setting, identifying individual needs more precisely and promoting more self-assessment by the pupils themselves, are still being developed, and feature in the school improvement plan. For example, pupils set themselves targets in English that are kept inside exercise books and referred to, but this does not yet apply to other subjects. Good use has been made of assessment to identify and provide in-service training, and some teachers are beginning to assess how well pupils achieved in their lessons and to amend their planning, if necessary, for the next lesson. Marking is inconsistent, and does not always inform pupils as to how they can improve their work.
26. The teaching of pupils with additional needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know them well, and make very positive efforts to provide work that is well adapted to their needs and appropriately challenging. There is good collaboration between teachers and TAs, providing good support for individuals and effective teaching to small groups. However, the opportunities to use the valuable resource available from TAs, in lessons in which the teacher is occupying the attention of the whole class, are sometimes missed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8%)	17 (34%)	20 (40%)	8 (16%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The school provides a good, inclusive curriculum, which is broad and balanced, and very well enriched. It is creative and innovative at times. The accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the Foundation Stage receive a rich and relevant curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their first language, is very good.
- Provision for ICT has improved significantly with the installation of a suite of computers, and now meets statutory requirements.
- The curriculum provided for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Very good inclusion procedures mean that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- Support for learning outside the school day, and participation in the arts are very good.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of writing across the curriculum.
- Pupils in Year 3 are taught for significantly less than the recommended time.

Commentary

27. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection. The key issue then, to develop comprehensive schemes of work for all subjects, relating directly to the National Curriculum, has been addressed satisfactorily. Earlier weaknesses identified in ICT have been rectified, the literacy and numeracy strategies developed successfully, alongside a recently adopted new scheme of work for science, and a creative, imaginative and practical 'hands-on' approach introduced where possible, which is especially appropriate and helpful in a school where such a high proportion of pupils enter with well below average language skills. Other new schemes of work, linked to the National Curriculum, have been successfully adopted.
28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is interesting and well organised, and it closely follows national guidance. Effective teamwork between staff in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that there is continuity across the classes. Curricular provision and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Children have opportunities to choose and explore a wide range of activities independently and to benefit from well-structured teaching, including sessions that introduce them to the early elements of the literacy hour and daily numeracy sessions.
29. Pupils in Year 7 receive a curriculum appropriate for their age, including French, and an increase in the level of staffing enables, for example, all three elements of science – physics, chemistry and biology – to be taught simultaneously in three rotating groups very effectively. However, providing a curriculum for these older pupils remains an ongoing challenge for the school if they are to extend them further, particularly in the light of the planned reduction in the number of classes.
30. Planning across the curriculum is good. Learning objectives feature prominently in all lessons through the adopted WALT approach – “We are learning to...” and emphasis is placed on

targeting specific, subject vocabulary in almost all lessons. Innovative approaches to learning such as the CASE –‘Cognitive Acceleration for Science Education’ approach, involving two teachers in an intensive question and answer lesson with a Year 3 class and ‘emotional literacy’, for a group of pupils with special educational needs, are very appropriate in a school where there are so many pupils with language difficulties, and this has a positive effect on raising standards.

31. The curriculum provided for pupils’ personal, social, health and citizenship education is very strong, though at the expense of RE lessons, with which the subject is timetabled. Here, the balance between the two is unsatisfactory, though elsewhere across the school the curriculum is well balanced. All statutory requirements are met. Opportunities for developing pupils’ speaking and listening skills are very good but there are insufficient planned opportunities for developing pupils’ writing across all subjects. The school’s time allocations to the curriculum are satisfactory, overall, but pupils in Year 3 are grouped with Years 1 and 2, and receive significantly less curriculum teaching time for their age than is usually found in other schools. Good cross-curricular links are planned in subjects such as science, geography and design and technology.
32. The school provides very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Inclusion, overall, is excellent. The school’s logo ‘The World in a School’ is an apt description for a school that promotes excellent racial harmony and awareness of good citizenship. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is guided by individual educational plans (IEPs), which are highly effective working documents, providing detailed strategies and advice on how problems may be tackled in achieving targets. A very strong feature of these plans is that each one is the product of close co-operation between the school’s special educational needs co-ordinator, class teacher, TAs, parents - and, above all, the pupil. Because they are so individually tailored and progress is so frequently reviewed, IEPs have a very positive effect on how pupils achieve.
33. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also very good. The balance of support and withdrawal is planned well and all teachers are aware of the developing language needs of pupils. The co-ordinator provides in-class support and consultancy to teachers.
34. Pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their development. Transfer from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 has been improved; and appropriate contact is kept with senior schools to which pupils move when they leave the school, through sports and shared teaching, and through good induction procedures.
35. The very good range of clubs offered to pupils in Years 4 to 7, and arranged visits and visitors to the school, enrich the curriculum very well. Clubs for younger pupils are less well considered. Provision for sport is good, and for the arts, especially in music, provision is very good. Museums, theatre groups, artists and performances in local school festivals are all used well to enrich the curriculum offered. The school is rightly proud of its recent ‘Artsmark’ gold award. The school sees the achievement in the arts as being important to developing pupils’ self-esteem and confidence. Outside speakers regularly talk to pupils about other faiths and community matters, and during the inspection three year groups were out on educational trips to places such as Hatfield House, Aldenham Park, and the local police station. Members of the choir took part in rehearsals with other schools for a local ‘Songfest’ performance. Special curriculum days such as a ‘World Book Day’ and ‘Big Arts Week’ feature throughout the year. Such provision is a regular feature of curriculum planning and enhances pupils’ learning very well.
36. Teachers and other staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and those from the southern hemisphere contribute positively to the very broad cultural mix within the school. Previous high mobility amongst teachers has been reduced, improving the quality of teaching and learning. Good support is given by TAs who work well with teachers, contributing

positively to the raising of standards. The accommodation is good, and for the Foundation Stage it is very good. The new ICT suite is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Specialist rooms for science, design and technology and for art are available for older pupils but tend to be used insufficiently, partly due to their design layout. The school's pond and small environmental area are similarly underused. The school is aware of the need to improve the appeal of the large playground used by older pupils. The previous inspection criticised the open-plan design in certain parts of the building for causing noise distraction. The school has overcome this successfully.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides good support, advice and guidance and involves pupils well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils trust the adults in the school and say they would be able to confide in them, should any difficulties arise.
- Children entering the reception class and those joining during the school term are sensitively introduced to the school's routines.
- The school encourages pupils to voice their opinions, and acts upon them whenever it can.

Commentary

37. The strengths in care, support and guidance noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. Health and safety and child protection procedures are comprehensive and all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
38. During discussions, pupils say that they feel very well looked after at school and that they would not hesitate to seek help or advice, if they needed it. Pupils for whom English is an additional language share this positive view and say that they feel very well supported. Pupils who feel ill during the school day are very well looked after and there is a good awareness of the needs of pupils who have specific medical conditions.
39. There is a close relationship with local pre-school groups, and parents who are new to the school are offered a home visit. This provides an early opportunity for parents, staff and children to get to know one another at an early stage and this helps new arrivals to settle down quickly once they actually enrol. Parents are also invited to watch videos that provide a good insight into everyday school life and let them know what their children will be doing once they actually enrol. There is a very good induction programme for children and parents so that they feel welcome in the school. Home visits are a significant feature. Assessments of children's progress are used effectively to support children's learning. Members of the school staff give very good support for children's learning of English as an additional language. Many of the families living within the area served by the school are relatively mobile and pupils often join during the school term. Procedures for inducting these new pupils are very good for identifying specific needs, and pupils spoken to during the inspection spoke highly of the way they were looked after.
40. A high quality of care is provided for pupils with additional needs. Their progress is monitored continuously and in detail, and the support provided is adjusted according to need. A significant feature of the care that pupils receive is the way in which they are directly involved in setting their own targets and in reviewing their progress. Considerable trouble is taken by teachers and TAs to ensure that these pupils have full access to all the opportunities which the school provides. Where there are special difficulties in the long or short term, additional support is provided, as in the lesson in emotional literacy that was seen. It was very effective in helping a small group of pupils to recognise and control problems of relationships and emotions.

41. Around one in four of the pupils who completed their pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the extent to which the school listens to their ideas. Inspectors followed this up with several groups of pupils and found they did not support this view. In fact, pupils were pleased with the way they are encouraged to express their views and feel that the school takes their suggestions seriously. For example, the school council meets each month and provides a useful forum through which pupils can air their suggestions and views. The school encourages them to do so. For example, class representatives have recently circulated and analysed questionnaires in order to gauge the overall level of support for issues such as hot lunches and storage lockers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good and links with the community are excellent. Links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exceptionally close links with the community enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development most effectively.
- Links with other primary schools and the main receiving secondary school are very good.
- Parents receive good information about the school and the progress their children are making.
- Parents feel the school is approachable and that procedures to deal with any concerns and complaints are good.
- Too many parents book holidays and extended trips overseas during the school term.

Commentary

42. An exceptionally wide range of visitors contributes to school life, and representatives from numerous community organisations visit to tell the pupils about their role in society. These include serving police officers and members of the fire brigade, as well as authors, artists, musicians and members of the local business community. The school choir participates in the annual 'Songfest' and pupils also take part in local sport, music and dance festivals. Pupils and their parents who attend the family literacy courses visit local restaurants and the nearby library in order to learn how to use their new skills. These initiatives help pupils to become familiar with the wider world and help them to make the best possible use of the many facilities and resources available within the community. In so doing, they support pupils' overall achievement.
43. Considerable efforts are made to involve parents in what the school tries to do to meet pupils special educational needs, and there is no hesitation in making contact when necessary. Parents participate in preparing individual education plans and in reviewing progress. There are strong and positive relationships with a range of outside agencies that provide valuable support and advice. The school operates a successful Family Literacy programme that operates in alternate terms. There is also a school-based counsellor for parents and pupils. Parents of very young children are welcomed into the school to help their children settle in and to ask about their children's progress. They are encouraged to share in the teaching of their children by taking home storybooks, often in dual languages.
44. Most of the pupils transfer to one particular high School at the end of Year 7, and close liaison between the various members of staff helps to ensure that this move goes smoothly. Teachers from the secondary physical education department teach Year 7 pupils sport and dance and this helps them to get to know one another at an early stage. Pupils are also able to spend one day at the high school during the term before they move up, and members of staff liaise closely in order to exchange personal and curricular information. There are also good links within the local cluster of primary schools.

45. Parents are well informed about the progress their children are making. There is a formal opportunity each term to meet their child's teacher, and pupils' annual reports give parents a good idea as to what their children can do. They do not, however, always put this into context and they give parents little idea as to how the standard of their child's work compares with the national average.
46. The school encourages parents to be open and frank about voicing any suggestions or concerns. Their opinions are welcomed and parents, for example, recently participated in a survey that asked for their views on lunch time meal provision. Parents appreciate this approach and almost all those who completed their pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they would feel able to speak to the school if they had a problem or complaint.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is very good. Governors are very knowledgeable, committed and supportive. Leadership past and present is good and has led to very good improvement. The acting headteacher has steered the school well through a difficult period. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good overall governance.
- Good leadership supported by the leadership of key staff.
- Very good financial management.

Commentary

47. Governors are very committed and supportive, and carry out their statutory duties well. They subscribe strongly to the schools principles of care and inclusion and of raising achievement, and work well with the schools management to achieve these ends. Their part in guiding and supporting the school during the difficult period around and after the previous headteachers illness and death has been particularly notable and effective. They have very good understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses, and, consequently, a clear and appropriate vision for the future. As a result, strategic planning is good. The local education authority supports the governing body very well.
48. The clear strengths of the school have been developed because of overall good leadership, past and present which has led to the overall very good improvement since the last inspection. Strategic planning is good. There is a sense of strong teamwork and shared values across all adults working in the school that results in the school's excellent commitment to inclusion and racial harmony. The acting headteacher has built on the previous headteacher's legacy and steered the school well through a very difficult time. She has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to develop, as indicated in her evaluation prepared for the inspection. She clearly values the contribution that individual members of staff make and works to ensure that there is good communication and a shared ethos based on mutual respect. Seeing the 'Artsmark' application through, and the eventual gaining of the award for the school, are examples of her taking the school forwards and building on its strengths to foster pupils' achievement.
49. She is supported, overall by good leadership from key staff. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed so that the curriculum is taught well, children enjoy interesting activities, and achievement is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership and management. She is very well informed, and leads teachers and TAs by her own example and through providing appropriate information about pupils and detailed and skilled advice as to how specific needs may be met. She manages a wide range of data and resources very well, so that decisions are well supported by the right evidence and the right strategies. This highly methodical and well-organised approach means that teaching is well focused and that the quality of learning is enhanced: the provision for pupils with special

educational needs is a strength of the school. The very good provision for pupils with English as an additional language is well led and organised. The good provision in English, mathematics, science and ICT reflects the, at least, good leadership in these subjects

50. The school is managed well. The acting headteacher, in her role as substantive deputy, has introduced the cycle of monitoring and evaluation and operated the performance management. Monitoring is effective, and performance management and its effectiveness in bringing about improvement are very good. Good use is made of recorded data, overall, to evaluate the school's improvement. Though the school has had few newly qualified teachers for some time, there are good induction arrangements in place to support any teachers new to the school. The acting headteacher is the mentor for these new arrivals and all members of staff, especially the teacher in the parallel class, are very supportive. There are good arrangements for the continuing development of training for staff. Good quality training has been arranged for the use of questions, classroom climate, whole-staff training for ICT and 'Arts for Schools'. There is a cycle of training in place for TAs. Teacher stability over the last two years is recognised as having had a significant impact on raising standards. Good use is made of sharing teacher expertise across year group; for example, in Year 6 one teacher takes both classes for physical education, whilst the other teaches RE. Teaching assistants are well trained and used effectively to support and relieve teachers; for example, by taking story time or 'golden time', and, in some cases, (art) teaching. The acting headteacher has taken forward work reforms. The office is very well managed so that teachers are able to focus on curriculum and issues relating to pupils.
51. The school's finances are very well managed by the acting headteacher and the school manager, who has a very accurate overview of the budget, as well as exercising detailed supervision of the schools day-to-day expenditure patterns. She provides regular reports to the governors finance committee, with whose chair she is in close touch. Accounts are well maintained, and earmarked funds are clearly traceable. Spending decisions are made with great care, and only after governors have asked perceptive questions about their effectiveness. Questions are also asked after expenditure in order to test the effect it has upon the life of the school and upon pupils achievement. At present, there is a significant underspend in order to finance an expected drop in pupil numbers, so that appropriate levels of staffing may be maintained. Taking into account pupils' good achievement, the effective teaching, the good leadership and management, the very good ethos and excellent inclusion - the school offers good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,463,429
Total expenditure	1,348,943
Expenditure per pupil	3,372

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	86,431
Balance carried forward to the next	113,486

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and children achieve well.

Most children speak English as an additional language, and very good teaching ensures that there is equal opportunity for children from a wide range of home backgrounds to learn at a good rate in the Nursery and two Reception classes. Teaching and curricular provision have improved since the last inspection. Provision for children who have special educational needs is very good because their needs are identified early and suitable support is given. Children achieve well from a low start and most reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Being in the early stage of acquiring English hampers their attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, where standards are well below expectations by the time they join Year 1. Members of staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and a secure grasp of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Teaching assistants play a significant role in the teaching. Day-to-day assessments of children's progress are used well to plan work in all areas of learning. The school is taking part in the Effective Early Learning Project, which is developing staff expertise in child observation and assessment. The school recognises that procedures for linking the stepping-stones of the early curriculum to the introduction of the National Curriculum in Year 1 are an area for further development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children adapt well to school life.
- There is a high level of racial harmony.
- Children behave very well.

Commentary

52. Children achieve well and reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. They learn at a good rate and behave very well, despite the challenges that many of them – including refugees and children who have already moved home a number of times – have faced. Throughout the Foundation Stage, very good teaching and support enable children from a wide range of races and cultures to relate very well to one another. Children's personal, social and emotional development is monitored effectively. Inclusion is exemplary. Staff engage very well with children and appreciate their individual needs; every child is valued. Simple rules are applied firmly and fairly, so that there is a purposeful and pleasant atmosphere in all classrooms. Management of children's behaviour is very good; children are encouraged to account for their own actions and to consider how their behaviour affects other people.
53. Induction procedures are very good, and most children come happily into the Nursery each day. Those who are occasionally reluctant are soon integrated because of the school's sensitive and helpful approach. Children gradually adapt to school routines, learn to share and become increasingly responsible in personal hygiene and help to keep the classroom tidy. In story times, children listen with increased concentration. In discussions, they gradually learn to take turns fairly and listen to one another respectfully. In the Reception classes, children become increasingly independent as they respond to the teachers' challenging expectations. In the role-play area and during outdoor play, children play happily together and find ways of expressing themselves through gestures when words fail them. For example, when a child

wanted his friends to go back up the climbing-frame to slide down again, he excitedly pointed to the top with both arms and the fun continued. In a physical education lesson, children followed the teacher's instructions well and changed from their kit to school clothes with very little adult help. Staff gradually introduce longer periods of direct teaching and more intensive teaching of groups, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to prepare children for the brisker pace of lessons in Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children acquire oral English at a very good rate but do not reach the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Very good teaching helps children to achieve well.
- Activities are relevant and enjoyable for the children.

Commentary

54. Despite very good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, most children do not reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. However, they achieve well from a variety of starting points, including a wide range of home languages and social and economic backgrounds. Children acquire oral English at a very good rate and gradually become more adept at using it in conversation. Good progress is maintained throughout the Foundation Stage. A significant number of children need adult help in applying it to reading and writing. Staff promote a love of literature and oral expression. They enjoy talking to the children and are constantly to be seen and heard engaging in conversations, telling stories or looking at books with children. As a result, children learn at a good rate, enjoy this area of learning and have very good attitudes to it.
55. In the Nursery, staff make good use of time to ensure that children gain maximum benefit from part-time attendance. Each session is well planned and the classroom is well organised to ensure that language is promoted strongly. Attractive displays are labelled well with appropriate vocabulary. A love of literature is fostered from the start, and children already have favourite stories. Teachers make learning fun when they use the theme of a story to enhance work in all areas of learning; for example, when children in the Nursery tasted fruit and made models from papier mâché after hearing about 'Oliver's Fruit Salad'. Children recognise that they can communicate by making marks, and staff provide areas of the classroom where children can do so by recording their experiences and writing messages to people they know.
56. In the Reception classes, the teaching and learning of letter shapes and sounds are a significant feature of the school's programme for reading and writing. More able children know the sounds, and a few can recognise commonly used simple words. Staff encourage children to express themselves in writing, and a few children write captions under pictures with recognisable words and clear messages. After preparing large wooden containers before putting plants in them, an able child wrote 'We mesrd the plastek and kat it to the rit siz' ('We measured the plastic and cut it to the right size'). Children illustrate their work with lively drawings. Challenge and encouragement are evident when staff ask searching questions during discussions; for example, children were asked to describe whether people in a storybook were 'on', 'under', 'next to' or 'behind' objects. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children's progress is enhanced through the involvement of parents, as children take books home regularly. There is a good range of storybooks in dual languages so that home languages are respected, enjoyed and can be used to enrich learning. A few children read competently and all children enjoy telling stories by looking at the illustrations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Everyday situations are used well to develop children's mathematical understanding.
- Mathematical vocabulary is taught very well.
- Despite very good teaching, children achieve well but do not reach the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

57. Children achieve well, but most do not reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. Teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is very good and staff use every opportunity to consolidate and extend children's mathematical vocabulary. Children learn at a good rate and become increasingly familiar with the number system, measuring and balancing. In the Nursery, they play with sand and water and begin to use words such as 'more' and 'less'. They count to ten with the teacher, and follow the teacher's example to count further when working out how many children are present at the beginning of the session. During social sessions, such as snack time, children count and share as they sort out the drinks and the food. Staff recognise that children need more help than is usually given at this age in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, and they emphasise new words; for example, when the word 'half' was stressed as fruit was cut up and shared.
58. In the Reception classes, the teachers' good planning leads to the children's good achievement; for example, when the faces of solid wooden shapes were explored and children then printed with them to reinforce learning. Children enjoy mathematical activities, and there is a good range of equipment for sorting, ordering and counting activities. Children count confidently to ten, and higher-attaining children count to 20. Less able children have difficulty in counting objects reliably. Staff work patiently with children to achieve success with tasks; then praise is given warmly to raise children's self-esteem. In addition to the mathematical ideas incorporated into activities such as story telling, art and craft and playing with construction kits, children benefit from very good teaching in small groups, when specific mathematical ideas are developed. The early stages of the National Numeracy Strategy are gradually introduced. Higher-attaining children understand 'one more' and 'one less', and average-attaining children do so with help. The progress of lower-attaining children is hampered by their weak language skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a wide range of relevant activities to engage children's interest
- ICT is taught and used well to further children's learning

Commentary

59. Members of staff in all three classes are enthusiastic, caring and imaginative in their provision for the children. Teaching is very good and learning is of good quality. Well-planned, interesting activities enhance children's experience and extend their vocabulary. As a result, children achieve well and most reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. When they start school, a significant number of children have limited experiences of the area

outside school and know little about the wider world. Throughout the Foundation Stage, staff take the children for walks, read books with them and bring visitors into school to widen children's knowledge and bring relevance to their learning. Teachers organise interesting trips to broaden children's experiences and extend their general knowledge. Children have been to a farm and a zoo, and they go for walks in the neighbourhood and visit the park. Visitors to the school include a vet, the police and theatre groups.

60. In the Nursery, children's social uses of talk do not match their use of talk for learning, so staff ask questions and help children to sort out their ideas; for example, when they explored what the inside of a pineapple might look like. Children develop early investigative skills as they explore the school grounds. They look at insects through magnifying glasses and count the spots on ladybirds. Understanding of what the seaside is like is promoted as children learn about fish, shells and boats. Staff interact very well with the children, pick up their ideas and take their learning forward effectively. There is an element of fun in the teaching; for example, when children made jelly and heard the story, 'Don't put your finger in the jelly, Nellie'. In the Reception classes, children gain an increasing understanding of different cultures and ways of life. Staff plan tasks that prepare children very effectively for subjects in the National Curriculum such as science, design and technology and ICT. Children's scientific understanding was developed very effectively when they were involved in developing the school grounds. They made designs for arranging plants in the containers in the playground, and considered which insects they would like to attract. Skills in design and technology are developed well as children join and fix components with increasing skill and make models of simple vehicles and buildings from construction kits.
61. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children develop appropriate skills in ICT as they explore simple programs on the computers and gradually extend their skills in responding to signals; they dragged images across the screen, matched pictures and reinforced their learning in literacy and numeracy. Good teaching in the Reception year ensured that children used a drawing package effectively to create beautiful pictures of rainbows, and more able children added simple text such as 'I lik ranbos' ('I like rainbows') and 'I lk mpcr' ('I like my picture').

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources, including outdoor provision, are good.
- Skills are taught systematically.
- Children are supported well to acquire the skills necessary for writing.

Commentary

62. There is a good range of equipment for children to practise balancing, climbing, sliding, and riding on wheeled toys. Children in all three classes run, jump, climb and balance with confidence and develop appropriate levels of muscular control and co-ordination. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the Foundation Stage. There are opportunities for children to exercise and play freely and for the teaching of specific skills. This ensures that physical activity is not just supervised – it is part of the teaching programme. Most children move around with an awareness of space and are controlled and purposeful. Teachers plan well for the children to develop skills for handwriting, cutting, modelling with construction kits and painting. Children's manipulative control improves as they roll, squeeze and shape dough. Staff help children to use scissors, and skills for cutting improve as a result. Children handle pencils with varying degrees of success as they make marks in the well-organised writing area.
63. Good provision in the Reception classes includes a very good fenced outdoor play area that is used regularly, and children enjoy well-planned physical education lessons in the school hall.

Good features of these lessons are well-established routines and the systematic teaching of skills, such as moving along a bench. Good planning of activities keeps children on the move so that they have plenty of exercise. Children have many opportunities to use simple craft equipment, construct models from reclaimed materials, model with dough, play with model vehicles and build with construction kits. During these activities, most children achieve well and develop skills in line with expectations. Less able children require adult help to achieve success but they progress well from their starting point.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned activities stir children's imagination.
- Creative development is linked well to other areas of learning.
- Musical education is of very good quality.

Commentary

64. Activities in all three classes are planned to be inviting so that children use their imagination and enjoy what they do. The quality of teaching is very good and children learn at a good rate. Musical activities are of high quality throughout the Foundation Stage. Specialist teaching ensures that children enjoy singing, have opportunities to play percussion instruments and learn to listen and improve their work. The teachers link activities well to other areas of learning; for example, when children pointed to pictures as they sang about caterpillars. Children gain confidence as they perform for their parents in seasonal concerts.
65. In the Nursery, children extend their imagination in the role-play area as they pretend to be grown-ups. Their creative skills develop well as they use a wide variety of paints, colour sticks, papers and malleable materials, such as modelling dough. Higher-attaining children draw and paint pictures confidently, and less able children explore the use of materials as they dab, stroke and splash with paint. Children create bright pictures of themselves, print with a variety of objects and explore contrasting colours. During the winter, they splattered white paint on to black paper to create snowy pictures. In the Reception classes, children's drawing and painting skills develop well and children become more confident in using paint in a variety of ways. Art is used very effectively for children to express their ideas in other areas of learning. For example, children drew amusing and attractive pictures after hearing the story, 'Mrs Honey's Hat', and they recorded a visit to the park, with drawings of people playing and tall trees. Children's artwork is displayed attractively to promote the children's self-esteem and brighten the classroom.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils learn well, and make good progress, especially those who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language.
- Standards are below average, overall.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Standards of marking are inconsistent, and target-setting procedures are underdeveloped.
- Homework is well used to support reading development.

Comment

66. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Although standards remain below average, pupils' achievements are now consistently good, and leadership is now very good.
67. In the national attainment tests in 2003, standards at the end of Year 2, in reading and writing, were well below national averages for all schools, although they were above those from similar schools. At the end of Year 6, they were in line with the national averages, and well above those for similar schools. Inspection findings (applied to the 2004 cohorts of pupils, for whom test results are awaited) are that standards are well below average in Year 2, below average in Year 6, and average in Year 7. The reasons for the lower than average standards lie in very low levels of literacy and oracy with which pupils enter the school, the very high numbers of pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, and the high degree of mobility among pupils, which means that a significant proportion leave or join before the final assessments at the end of Year 6. Once they are established, pupils make good progress, building upon past attainment. This includes those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, who often make better progress than their peers.
68. In speaking and listening, standards are well below average in Years 1 and 2. Although the caring ethos of the school and teachers friendly approaches do a great deal to confer confidence, pupils speaking is often hesitant because many do not have sufficient word reserves to express what they want to say. Nevertheless, they are careful and respectful listeners. Among older pupils, discussions in pairs and groups show judgement and maturity, though, again, the right word does not always come easily. They find difficulty in making formal presentations and, even in Year 7, although there is more fluency and ease when pupils are asked to act in the role of television presenters, there is more preoccupation with the fun of the task than with getting it right, indicating a need to provide more well-supported opportunities for formal speaking throughout the school.
69. In reading, standards in Years 1 and 2 are well below national levels, although a small number of pupils read aloud fluently and expressively. When books and stories are shared, or read aloud, pupils respond enthusiastically and with understanding. They still have problems, however, in turning the printed page into speech, which is monotonous and mechanical, even though it may be accurate. Pupils in older year groups usually read with understanding, but it is often dull and unrelieved, and few examples were seen of pupils tackling really challenging

texts effectively. The development of reading standards is well supported by homework: pupils are encouraged to take books home daily.

70. Standards of writing are low, largely because a majority of pupils start their school lives with very low word-handling skills, if they have any experience of written language at all. The progress they make as they move up the school and reach average or nearly average standards is therefore good. Higher-attaining pupils at an early stage write well-constructed stories, and most try to choose the right word, even if limited reserves of known words mean that spelling is often phonetic. (We plad pars the parsall). By the end of Year 2, a significant number communicate effectively in writing, but meaning is often difficult to understand. Handwriting is often not well placed or formed; nor is it joined. By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils of average or above average levels of attainment can vary the lengths and grammatical structures of their sentences to add interest to their writing. Once more, however, weak language skills bring standards down to about or below the average. Pupils do not know the range and variety of words that might be expected of children of their ages, and, as a result, misspelling and incorrect use are frequent, and expression is immature. In spite of their progress, pupils in Year 6 do not come up to national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 met the national average in the 2003 tests, but were not performing at this level during the inspection. There have been some moves in and out of this age group, which accounts for the drop in standards coupled with the fact that they are receiving less practice in formal writing.
71. The good progress made by pupils over time is supported by a good quality of learning and teaching. Pupils enjoy English, and are very keen to learn; this is supported by good or very good teaching. Teachers plan well, and share their objectives with their classes, with the result that lessons have a good pace, structure and variety, and that learning is a shared and collaborative experience. This is underpinned by teachers' friendly style, and the very good relationships which exist between them and their classes. They know pupils' aptitudes and problems well, and adapt their lessons appropriately, and this, combined with pupils' good motivation, means that all stay on task. Teaching assistants also have good knowledge of their pupils, and they provide well-focused support. However, when the teacher is addressing the whole class, the opportunity to involve them by, for example, sharing aspects of the delivery with the teacher or by recording or monitoring is lost, and a valuable resource is underused. Marking is inconsistent. Some is full, evaluative and helpful, but some is bland or non-existent. There is no checking in subsequent work to see if the advice given has been followed. Individual target-setting is being developed, and a good aspect of this process is that it is shared with pupils. Nevertheless, it needs to be more systematic and structured.
72. English is very well led by its two co-ordinators, who form a skilled and effective team. They are enthusiastic about literacy and ambitious on behalf of their pupils. In a short time, they have worked hard to evaluate their subject and to establish and act upon priorities. Overall, resources are good, although the schools multicultural character means that there is a strong need to enhance the number and variety of bilingual texts and recorded material.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. The development of language and literacy in other subjects is supported satisfactorily through a focus upon key words and subject-specific vocabulary. There is not, however, a consistent approach to the marking of written work, and pupils have few chances to make formal spoken presentations. In subjects other than English, copying texts and completing worksheets or puzzles too commonly replace the provision of opportunities to write creatively and at length, although very good examples of pupils recording the results of their own research were seen in Year 4. The school library and occasions such as book festivals support reading well. The library contains a good collection (supplementing classroom libraries), well ordered and maintained in a pleasant and welcoming room.
74. **French** is taught to pupils in Year 7. Only one lesson was seen, and it is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about the quality of provision. There has been good

improvement since the last inspection, when no specialist teaching was available, a well-qualified native French speaker has been appointed.

75. In the one Year 7 lesson observed, teaching was very good, with the teacher adopting phonetic strategies which helped pupils to acquire accents unusually good for pupils of this age. This was helped by pupils' own positive attitudes and the teacher's lively and engaging style. Resources, such as models and pictures are good, and well used to support teaching. Subject planning is good, and, where necessary, meets with National Curriculum requirements.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a low start.
- Mathematical language is promoted effectively.
- Teaching is good overall, with a relevant, practical approach and good use of demonstration to ensure that pupils know what to do.
- Target-setting is not yet embedded as a process to help pupils to make faster progress.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

76. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and, in national tests in 2003, pupils in Year 6 achieved well in comparison with pupils in similar schools nationally. The school's performance was very good when the number of refugee children was taken into account. In 2004, the school expects to achieve the challenging targets set with the local education authority. Current standards, by the end of Year 6, are below average but achievement continues to be strong, with the majority of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard. Bearing in mind children's low starting point on joining the school, often during the school year and usually in the early stages of acquiring English, the school does well. There has been a slight difference between the performance of boys and girls over the past four years, with boys doing better than girls. No significant difference was noted during the inspection. Results in 2003 in Year 2 were well below average compared with all schools nationally but average in comparison with similar schools. Current standards are below average, but pupils achieve well and make good progress bearing in mind that many are at the early stages of learning English.
77. Teaching is good, overall, with examples of very good and excellent lessons. Teaching assistants work well with pupils, supporting groups effectively and ensuring that pupils keep on task and know what to do. Teachers are confident in teaching the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy because of the good leadership of the subject and effective staff training. Day-to-day assessments are used effectively to plan appropriate work for pupils. Analyses of pupils' performance from year-to-year are being developed appropriately to track pupils' progress through the school. Further work on target-setting is under way to make the best use of these analyses, involve pupils more in the learning process and promote their faster progress. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs. Provision for them is usually very good. Occasionally, the task set is too difficult and is not explained clearly enough. This is especially important when pupils do not speak English as their first language.
78. In Year 7, pupils work diligently and follow the appropriate curriculum for the age group. They achieve well and standards are broadly average. Pupils become increasingly proficient at applying their mathematical knowledge in a variety of situations. They convert measurements accurately from metric to imperial, identify the correct realm of probability when dealing with possibilities and explore the relationship between proportion and ratio. Learning in geometry is

promoted well as pupils investigate the characteristics of quadrilaterals and identify different types of angles.

79. The school emphasises the learning of multiplication tables and, by the end of Year 6, even the least able pupils are able to respond to quick-fire questions at the beginning of lessons. However, pupils in the early stage of learning English need a great deal of support to apply their knowledge of the number system to practical situations. Teachers work hard to overcome such difficulties by stressing the importance of the regular use of correct mathematical vocabulary. Average and above-average attaining pupils in Year 6 successfully extracted information from a simple frequency table, converted it into percentages and represented it in pie charts. Earlier work shows how pupils built up the language of possibility – words such as ‘impossible’, ‘certain’ and ‘likely’. In another lesson, a significant number of less able pupils in Year 6 had great difficulty in understanding how to play a relatively simple game and were unable to explain clearly how they had solved problems.
80. Pupils respond well to the teaching and usually work hard and want to do well. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher began the lesson briskly and kept pupils ‘on their toes’ as they played a game that reinforced their knowledge of multiplication tables. As the lesson continued with work on reflective symmetry, the teacher built up the task in small steps, targeting appropriate questions at particular pupils. The teaching assistant watched diligently and supported pupils who needed help. Throughout the school, the teachers’ practical and relevant approach helps pupils to understand mathematical ideas more clearly. In Year 3, the teacher took the class outside to extend understanding of the division of numbers. The pupils got into groups of three, four and five to see how many were left over as the ‘remainder’. Teachers listen well to pupils. In Year 4, the teacher employed a very good, creative and active approach to ensure that the class, six of whom had recently joined the school, achieved success in understanding the idea of multiples. As the lesson progressed, the teacher listened carefully to pupils and assessed how they were getting on, so that the next lesson could be prepared appropriately.
81. By the end of Year 2, pupils build effectively on earlier learning and achieve well. Standards are below average, but pupils have made good progress in Years 1 and 2. Mathematical vocabulary is well displayed and equipment is well organised and readily available so that pupils can use apparatus if they need it to solve problems. Pupils gain an increasing understanding of the number system and apply it to everyday life with increasing confidence. In Year 1, pupils solved simple mathematical problems expressed in words. In a well-prepared lesson, they calculated the price of fruit and vegetables and wrote equations, or ‘number sentences’, to show their working out. The teacher had carefully organised the lesson to ensure that work was set at various levels of difficulty so that all pupils could be successful. In Year 2, pupils become more adept at organising information into block graphs. In a very good lesson, the teacher structured the teaching very well, explaining and demonstrating each step of the process carefully so that every pupil understood what to do. As a result, the task was carried out well and pupils achieved very well in relation to their ability.
82. Overall, teachers assess pupils’ attainment and progress well and check pupils’ work during lessons regularly and supportively. Marking of pupils’ work is regular and helpful. Pupils also write comments, asking for help with sorting out problems and occasionally celebrating their success in overcoming them. Pupils present their written work well, and, by the end of Year 6, use mathematical equipment such as rulers and protractors effectively.
83. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and planning well and has brought ideas for teaching into the school from her work as a leading teacher in the district. Resources are good, overall, and teachers use overhead projectors well to add focus to teaching and learning. The co-ordinator promotes the use of ICT in mathematics, and it is used increasingly to enhance pupils’ learning and to support work in data handling. In Year 1, pupils sort the colours in a handful of counters. In Year 7, they question the different ways of presenting data; for example, ‘is it easy to read and is the information clear?’

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. Mathematics is used and developed well in other subjects; for example, when pupils in Year 4 drew line graphs to record changes in water temperature. In design and technology, accurate measuring is promoted and in geography, pupils compare temperatures when studying climates. Shape and pattern are explored in art and design and patterns feature importantly in musical composition.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are rising above the national trend, and most pupils are achieving well.
- In comparison with similar schools, standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- The subject is very well led.
- The accommodation and resources for the subject are good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to learn.
- The new policy and scheme of work are helping to raise standards.
- Teachers do not always show pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

85. Standards of attainment, seen during the inspection at the end of Year 2, are well below average; at the end of Year 6 they are below average, and by the end of Year 7, they are average. Pupils enter the school with very low standards of language and attainment. However, they are achieving well right across the school, and some achieve very well. In the 2003 national standardised tests, Year 2 pupils' attainment was well below average, but higher-attaining pupils did as well as others across the country. In the 2003 tests at the end of Year 6, attainment was just below the national average but well above average in comparison with similar schools. A satisfactory proportion of pupils attained the expected Level 4, but fewer than the average number of pupils attained the higher Level 5. Attainment in 1997, at the time of the previous inspection, was well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and below average in comparison with similar schools. It is now well above the levels found in similar schools, and this is very good improvement. In 1997, the percentage of Year 6 pupils gaining the expected Level 4 was 42 per cent; in 2003 it was 89 per cent. Pupils' achievement accelerates as they acquire better skills in the English language moving up the school. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, and these pupils achieve equally well. Across the school, standards are rising at a faster rate than is found nationally.
86. The overall good, and sometimes very good, teaching and learning seen during the inspection – itself a good improvement since the previous inspection – is helping to raise standards significantly. But so too are the new subject policy and scheme of work, the very good leadership of the subject, the creative and practical approach to the curriculum, the improved attitudes of pupils to the subject, and the improved systems of assessment. Achievement at the end of Year 7 is satisfactory. This is because a considerable number of higher-attaining pupils leave after Year 6, and progress slows. School data confirm that those Year 6 pupils who have been in the school since Year 2 have achieved very well. This very positive picture has been achieved against a background of a greatly increased and growing proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils for whom English is a second language, increased numbers of refugees, increased absences, pupil turbulence, and a significantly higher proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals.

87. In all but one of the lessons seen teaching was at least good. In the one satisfactory lesson seen, the task set for pupils was insufficiently challenging. In the one very good lesson seen two teachers worked closely together with much high quality direct open-ended questioning, well supported with challenging practical tasks, when measuring and comparing liquids and solids, through the innovative Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education (CASE) approach. In Year 7, teaching provision and overall delivery are good. An additional teacher is employed, enabling the two classes to be divided into three smaller groups on a rolling programme so that all are taught physics, chemistry and biology as discrete subjects. This is good practice. Where appropriate, teachers plan imaginatively: Year 1 pupils used a construction kit to make vehicles for their work on forces, one pupil commenting from experience “You *push* it forward then you can *pull* it back”. Year 6 pupils much enjoyed and responded well to their classification and identification of chocolate ‘rocks’ before consuming them! Planning of lessons is good, with teachers and pupils alike well experienced to emphasising ‘We are learning to...’ – (WALT), at the start of lessons. Plenary sessions are well used to check that learning objectives are achieved, and all teachers are very good managers of pupils, with high expectations of conduct.
88. Pupils, in turn, want to please teachers, with whom they have a good rapport, and they generally work hard and enthusiastically, achieving good learning. Worksheets are used sensibly, but insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write, and standards of presentation are not always satisfactory. ICT is used to support the subject; some good data recording on temperature, using bar and line graphs, was observed in Year 4, but the school is aware that this is an area for further development. Good cross-curricular links are planned with subjects such as geography and design and technology, for example, in Year 7’s ‘Make Space for Nature’ topic. A very important feature of teachers’ planning is the regular and frequent emphasis on developing pupils’ vocabulary, targeting specific scientific vocabulary, such as *circuit*, *insulator*, *devices*, *volts* in a Year 4 lesson on electricity. All four elements of the subject are well taught, and there has been good improvement in the teaching of the development of investigative skills. No targets are yet set for pupils in science and teachers’ marking does not always tell pupils how they can improve their work.
89. The subject co-ordinator, who is responsible for the new policy and scheme of work, has worked very hard to raise standards to their present level, and her leadership and management of the subject are very good. The previous inspection judged that teachers made poor use of assessment. This has improved significantly. Pupils are assessed at the end of each term, and their needs identified. A Year 7 teacher observed had revised his planning, repeating and reinforcing a lesson on the earth’s tilt, which had earlier been unsuccessful. By changing to a new method and approach, pupils were able to better understand the concept and achieve their objective. Teachers work well with their TAs. The co-ordinator has carried out a full audit of the subject, ensured that it is sufficiently resourced, and has been enabled to support teachers through monitoring of their planning and lessons. Pupils’ work has been sampled, but as yet there are no portfolios of levelled work to assist teachers in judging attainment more accurately. The school has a central pond, but insufficient use is made of this. The subject is well supported by planned visits, such as that seen in the inspection week when Year 4 pupils visited Aldenham Park for the study of habitats in the field. There is good focus on the subject around the school, but much less awareness in Years 1 and 2. Overall, there has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in provision and standards.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well as a result.
- The subject is led very well.

Commentary

90. There has been very good improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. Standards are at least appropriate to the age of the pupils and they achieve well. Pupils are competent and confident users of ICT.
91. Teaching is good. The school uses nationally published schemes of work, slightly adapted, as the basis of teacher planning. The nationally funded ICT training provided the subject co-ordinator with the opportunity to discuss personal ICT skills that each member of staff had acquired and which have been further developed through professional training. In the lessons seen, teachers were confident with the software and working in the ICT suite, although operating 'the system' from the back of the class made it slightly awkward in some younger classes who tend to sit on the floor at the front. Class management is very good, however, and teachers are very clear what it is that they are specifically aiming to get across to the class. The software and tasks are matched well to the age groups. For example, a Year 3 class used a particularly well-chosen simulation to work out their underlying rules and the variable factors. In another lesson, pupils responded particularly well to seeing the artwork instantly available on the network. The immediacy fuelled their interest in their task of evaluating their work. Teachers are supported well by the technician. The school is currently trialling different methods of assessment.
92. Pupils' attitudes are good. Older pupils work independently, carrying out their research in preparation for a slide presentation, while younger pupils work with enthusiasm and some excitement as they strive to find the conditions for their plant to thrive or watch their graphs being created.
93. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, which is being shared in the school to good effect. She is clear about what needs to be developed and is encouraging the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Pupils are confident and competent users of ICT. In the sample of lessons seen, there was good use of ICT to support work in mathematics, science and art. The cross-curricular aspects of the subject are being encouraged by the co-ordinator through the purchase of specific software and technical resources such as digital cameras.

HUMANITIES

95. One history and no geography lessons were seen. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about these two subjects, which were therefore sampled. Classes were involved in personal, social and health education rather than RE lessons, and only one RE lesson was seen. There was insufficient recorded written work in pupils' books, and insufficient awareness of the subject in displays round the school to enable any judgements about standards, but they are likely to be below average. The previous inspection judged standards to be below average at the end of Year 2; by the end of Year 6 most pupils met the required standard. No judgement was made about Year 7.

96. The planning for **history** and **geography** indicates that there is good coverage of the National Curriculum recommendations, and that each receives an appropriate share of lesson time. The coverage is indicated by the good subject planning, and by the displays in classrooms around the school: in history, of life in the Victorian era, comparing schools and transport, and of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. In geography, there is a range of vivid displays, from the maps of journeys to school in the younger classes, to maps of town planning and evaluations of their locality by pupils in Year 7. Pupils' work in each subject is enriched by visits: during the week of the inspection visits were made to Hatfield House and to Aldenham Park.
97. The one history lesson that was seen was of outstanding quality: pupils were invited to play the role of archaeologists, and to explore a 'pyramid' in the centre of the room. There were thrilled to discover attractive and fascinating artefacts from ancient Egypt, expressing great awe and wonder as they withdrew golden-masked mummies and figures of gods and goddesses. Without flagging, they spent a whole afternoon working with a variety of source books, identifying and recording their observations of these objects.
98. Geography and history co-ordinators are well informed and have a good perception of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject. Resources are good, easily accessible, and well used, adding a vivid and lively dimension to pupils learning.

Religious education

Only one lesson was seen, and the evidence of work on which to make overall judgements about provision in religious education was very limited.

On the limited evidence available, current provision in religious education has a number of **unsatisfactory** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Identified topic coverage is satisfactory but lacking in depth.
- No overall judgements about teaching and learning, standards or achievement were possible.
- Leadership and management is unsatisfactory because of long-term absence.
- There is imbalance between the work in personal, social and health education and religious education.

Commentary

99. The school follows the Harrow Agreed Syllabus in RE, supported by elements of other national schemes of work. Identified topic coverage is satisfactory, and pupils spoken to showed a basic understanding of other religions. Arrangements are made for pupils to visit a mosque and church, and for speakers from different cultures to talk about their religions in whole-school assemblies. Pupils can discuss special books, and special places of worship, but their knowledge lacks depth. As one commented "We don't do much religious education". No overall judgement on teaching and learning is possible, but in the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were good, and pupils' attainment was satisfactory. It is clear from pupils' exercise books, or the lack of any RE books in some classes, and from talking with teachers, that very little writing is done. On the limited evidence available, current provision in RE is unsatisfactory. Leadership of the subject is currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has been on long-term leave of absence. There has been no monitoring nor formal assessment of the subject. Due to school circumstances, the planned in-service training of teachers in the subject could not take place this year. The school has developed pupils' personal, social and health education strongly and successfully over the last three years but RE has been neglected. Insufficient thought has been given to the balance between the two

subjects, and the importance of pupils' recording work in writing. The rate of improvement in

the subject, since the previous inspection, is unsatisfactory. The subject needs to be given a higher status within the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was possible to see only one lesson in design technology; the subject was sampled. No judgement on overall provision can be made, but it is likely to be satisfactory. Discussions were held with the subject co-ordinator and with pupils from Years 2, 6 and 7. What they said was broadly typical of the knowledge and understanding of pupils in the relevant age groups. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection, broadly average across the school, with most pupils achieving satisfactorily.

Art

Provision in art is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has a high status and is led well.
- Pupils have a good range of art opportunities enriched by work alongside artists.
- The arts are valued by the school.
- There is a clear focus now on developing progressive mastery of skills.

Commentary

100. Standards in art are broadly in line with expectations, although there are specific art projects where standards are above expectations for their particular age group. Pupils achieve well. Standards have at least been maintained since the last inspection but overall leadership and management of the subject and the range of media have improved and are now good. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of media and approaches throughout the school and there is now clear progression in their growing skills and control of the media because of the work of the subject co-ordinator, which is beginning to raise standards. The subject co-ordinator has taken the subject forward and has clear ideas for its future development, particularly in relation to developing skills. The arts are valued by the school, and classrooms and public spaces have clear evidence of the diversity and quality of the work, often drawing as its source on the artwork from other cultures. The framing of the work and the care taken in its presentation enhances pupils' self esteem. Resources are good, and there is a good balance between pupils creating and that creation being informed by the work of other artists.
101. A limited range of teaching was seen. Teaching is good. In one very good lesson, the teacher had photographed pupils' artwork and pupils used appropriate software to enhance a particular aspect of their work in order to write a written evaluation. In another, a teacher assistant led a class well in collage techniques relating to portraits of Henry VIII's wives, creating an industrious working ethos, with the teacher providing good individual and group support. In another lesson, two teachers worked together effectively, helping young pupils with their clay work.
102. Pupils' attitudes to the subjects are good. Pupils are keen and interested and want to do well. The school provides very good enrichment opportunities where pupils have the chance to work alongside an artist. The Escher-like butterflies mosaic surrounding the entrance, is a good example.
103. In **design and technology**, in Year 2, pupils had made detailed models of the island of Struay, linked with their literacy work on Katie Morag. Year 6 had produced good working models of a carousel, cleverly using an electric motor to power an elastic band drive pulley. However, the teacher had provided the pupils with the design, all of which were exactly the same, though

each was well-embellished individually. Opportunities provided for, and skills shown by, pupils in making are better than in designing - as found at the previous inspection. The school follows the latest national guidelines, and all elements of the subject, including food technology, are covered appropriately. The one lesson seen was satisfactory, with pupils designing slippers, using their own feet as templates, and developing measuring, sewing and cutting skills, but achieving too little over time due to the amount of chatter permitted. The accommodation and resources for the subject are good, with the facility of a specialist room equipped with work benches, though insufficient use is made of this. Pupils use appropriate formal summary sheets to evaluate their work, suggesting ways of improvement. Design and technology is used well to support other subjects. Subject leadership and management, and improvement since the previous inspection, are satisfactory.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of very good quality.
- The subject adds significantly to the ethos of the school.
- Pupils enjoy music.
- They have many opportunities to participate as singers and instrumentalists.

Comments

104. Music is a language that unites the school. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and the joy and expertise promoted in the subject contribute significantly to the ethos of the school. The quality of singing is often good and instrumental work is of a good standard. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English achieve well and enjoy the subject because they are able to express themselves without recourse to the written word. From evidence in Year 1 and assemblies, standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards are above expectations by the end of Year 6. No judgement is given for Year 7 because so little was seen.
105. Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils throughout the school benefit from enthusiastic teaching by the specialist teacher. When asked about favourite subjects, pupils include music because they are encouraged to be actively engaged and involved. Most pupils work sensibly together and know that it takes effort to achieve good results. Levels of concentration are very good for most pupils, but a few older pupils in Year 7 are reluctant to sing. Participation in local events stimulates instrumentalists to practise and provides pupils with valuable social experiences. Pupils build up a good repertoire of songs and learn to switch their singing to a range of tempi and moods because the songs are interesting and well chosen. Songs such as, 'Say hello to summer' and 'We've got to get on together' brighten the start to the day.
106. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoy the subject. In assemblies, pupils sang songs rhythmically and tunefully. They concentrated well and learned melodies quickly. In a very good lesson in Year 1, pupils built effectively on the skills and techniques learned previously. They were given time to experiment and enhance their understanding of how some musical instruments work and how sound effects are produced. Composition is introduced at an early stage and pupils listen to and copy the work of others. Sometimes, the teacher works with pupils to compose sounds to accompany stories. After experimentation and practice in the lesson, the teacher stressed the idea of 'performance' and insisted on firm discipline to achieve the required sounds and sequences. More able pupils modelled the rhythms so that the other pupils could keep the beat going.
107. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build well on previous learning. Their knowledge of tempi and dynamics is enhanced because the teacher explains carefully what they are to do and insists on their full

attention. The importance of silence is promoted, and pupils listen carefully for their turn to come in when playing instruments. Increasingly complex rhythms are introduced. In an exciting lesson in Year 4, pupils built up a rich tapestry of sounds, with clapping, drumming and other percussion sounds. As they practised for a concert, pupils in Year 3 sang confidently in two parts. Lovely, well-pitched singing was enhanced and supported by a concentrated, rhythmical percussion accompaniment.

108. Instrumentalists are taught by skilled visiting teachers of string, woodwind, brass, guitar, Indian music and steel pan instruments, and pupils are encouraged to share their skills with the rest of the school in collective worship and end-of-year concerts. Every pupil in Year 5 learns to play the steel pans, and nearly all Year 3 pupils play the recorder. Pupils practise their various instruments conscientiously and are heard and seen working in ensembles or in the full orchestra during the lunch hour and after school. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well and talented pupils have opportunities to excel. The orchestra and choir perform regularly in school and have contributed significantly to school celebrations and presentations. The good quality of musical provision, involvement and standards were major features in the school's achievement of the national 'Artsmark Gold' award. The curriculum is enhanced by visits from professional musicians to entertain and inspire pupils. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social and cultural development, and provides a basis for life-long enjoyment and participation in worthwhile activities.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory** with good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with the local sports college and the community which provide expert coaching.
- Good standards in swimming.
- Pupils' achievement is sound and they make steady progress.

Commentary

109. Pupils' achievement is sound in physical education and standards are at an appropriate level for their age. It was not possible to see Year 6 or Year 7 in physical education. Standards in swimming are good, with the majority of Year 4 pupils displaying confidence in the water and the ability to swim for sustained periods. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
110. The quality of teaching, overall, in the lessons seen is at least sound. It was often good. Although the sample of teaching seen was not extensive, it is nevertheless, clear that some teachers are much more confident in teaching the subject than others. Where teachers have good subject knowledge or experience in sports and games, they display much greater confidence and are able to teach and coach effectively. With these teachers, pupils' attitudes are good, they show keen enthusiasm, work at a good rate and try hard. Where the teacher displays enthusiasm for the subject, as in one Year 4 lesson seen, and is clearly a very positive role model because she has changed, looks the part and is able to demonstrate effectively, the class respond and bring additional value to the work through their efforts. The class respond to the teacher's ability to motivate and energise the class by bringing their own energy and enthusiasm into play. Similarly, in a swimming lesson, it was the teacher's detailed subject knowledge that enabled the pupil to make rapid progress with a tumble turn. Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons are planned effectively, using the nationally published schemes, class management is good and relationships are very good; what is lacking, perhaps, is the confidence that comes with subject knowledge and empathy for the subject.
111. This is being tackled by the school through the links with the local sports college, which have developed staff expertise and which also provide expert coaching in specific games. There is

also some limited specialist teaching. The current co-ordinators have recently inherited the subject and have had only limited time to put their stamp on the subject. They have clearly identified aspects, such as dance and use of apparatus, where there is a need for additional staff training. There is a variety of clubs in operation, including a popular fitness club.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

112. The provision for **personal, social and health education and citizenship** is very good. The development of mutual respect is a very strong feature of the school's ethos, which is reinforced consistently in classrooms. The result is that racial harmony is excellent. Teachers value pupils and work hard to make them feel special. The school takes the view that this is fundamental to establishing academic achievement. Pupils are listened to. Pupils, in discussion, were pleased with the way they are encouraged to express their views and feel that the school takes their suggestions seriously. For example, the school council meets each month and provides a useful forum through which pupils can air their suggestions and views. Anti-bullying is a theme regularly explored within 'circle time' and older pupils have drugs, sex and relationships education. Assemblies are seen as important in communicating the school's values. The major faith festivals are celebrated and the school's faith assemblies are used as a model within the LEA. Although a cliché, the school works very hard to create a family feel - a corporate 'oneness'.
113. The school also takes its responsibilities for developing citizenship very seriously. There is clear evidence around the school that pupils are asked to discuss the elements which make up a good citizen of the world. Pupils identify factors such as 'helping others when needed,' 'being kind', 'standing up to bullies'. The 'wall of kindness' is testimony to the positive steps the school takes to encourage consideration and respect for others. The school is actively engaged in charity work, raising money, for example, for a school in The Gambia. Green issues are actively explored and the school has won major environmental awards for the work that pupils have carried out. Through team captains, the buddy system and the school council pupils are actively encouraged to assume responsibility for others. The Young Enterprise citizenship programme, led by adults within the local business community, actively encourages citizenship. The school makes excellent use of local community resources to extend the learning opportunities.
114. The rich diversity of the ethnic heritage of the pupils of the school is a significant strength upon which the school builds very effectively. Pupils respect other faiths, other cultures and some pupils' bilingual skills. At the time of the inspection, the European football competition was in its early stages. In one lesson seen, the teacher wanted to create a quick tally chart and asked the young class for their favourite football teams in the competition - the diversity of choice was remarkable. What was even more remarkable was the class's total acceptance of others views as to their favourites. In that one class, there was a truly European dimension. This is also helped by the diversity of the staff. Some are visitors to the country and they bring with them a sense of internationalism and a respect for cultural diversity, which again helps to bind the school together.
115. The subject is very well led by the substantive deputy headteacher. In her senior management role, she is able to ensure a consistency of approach, particularly regarding the ethos of the school and the way individual pupils are valued.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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