

INSPECTION REPORT

GILLESPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Islington

LEA area: CEA@Islington

Unique reference number: 100405

Headteacher: Ms Louise Davies

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 266866

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	199
School address:	Gillespie Road Islington London
Postcode:	N5 1LH
Telephone number:	0207 226 6840
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jonathan Stopes-Roe
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is about the same size as other primary schools: it has 199 boys and girls on roll, aged 3 to 11. Twenty-six children attend the nursery full time and 30 children are in the reception year. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average and has steadily increased since the last inspection. English is an additional language for a very high proportion of pupils; a minority of pupils are at early stages in acquiring English. The largest group of pupils is White British; substantial numbers of pupils are also of Turkish, Spanish, Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. There are 18 refugees and asylum seekers. Eighty-seven pupils are supported through the ethnic minority achievement grant. A broadly average percentage of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs or have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils' difficulties include specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism and hearing impairment. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below that generally found amongst this age group and a significant proportion of children join the nursery with delayed speech and language. For those pupils who entered Year 1 at the beginning of this academic year, prior attainment was also below average overall, with well below average attainment in communication, language and literacy.

The school is part of an Education Action Zone. It is involved in Excellence in Cities and is taking part in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. It received a Schools Achievement Award in 2001. It provides drop-in facilities in the form of a listening / signposting service, just launched by the NSPCC, for two hours each week. The school works closely with the school improvement service of CEA@Islington, the NIZ (North Islington Zone) Excellence Cities (for curriculum / leadership support and training) and the North London Consortium (graduate teacher programme).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	M J Goodchild	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education Religious education
1166	R Hussain	Lay inspector	
23886	D McCarthy	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Special educational needs
3574	K Singh	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Geography History English as an additional language Ethnic minority achievement

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a reasonably effective school with some notable strengths. Achievement is good in English and mathematics, and pupils reach standards that are broadly average in these subjects by the time they leave the school. There is some underachievement in science, however, and shortcomings in the teaching of communication, language and literacy in the Foundation Stage are undermining the school's considerable efforts to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the positive learning culture that has been established and a great deal of good teaching mean that the school is well placed to move forward and build on its existing strengths. Pupils are cared for very well, which helps them to make good progress in their personal development. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall; the headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In English and mathematics, very good leadership and management and good teaching mean that pupils achieve well.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory overall in science and pupils do not reach the standards that they should.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in mathematical development, in personal, social and emotional development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Opportunities are missed for promoting language and communication skills in the nursery and for extending writing skills in the reception class.
- Assessment is underdeveloped in science, religious education and in some other subjects, although it is good in English and mathematics.
- The school ensures that pupils behave very well, have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to each other in this ethnically diverse community.
- Governance is satisfactory but governors do not work as closely with staff as they might.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected, in April 1999. It has been successful in tackling most of the issues identified at that time, including vastly improving the training opportunities provided for staff, and rectifying a previous lack of balance in the teaching time allocated to each subject. It has not fully remedied the lack of assessment in some subjects or ensured that a daily act of collective worship is provided. Science was identified as an area for development in the last inspection. Since that time, it improved but has once again emerged as the subject in which pupils achieve least well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	D	E*	E
mathematics	D	E	E*	E
science	D	D	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the bottom five per cent nationally*

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school's Year 2 National Curriculum test results in 2004 were very low in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Results were below those of similar schools in mathematics, well below in reading and very low in writing. In Year 6 tests, standards in English, mathematics and science placed the school in the bottom five per cent nationally and well below similar schools based on pupils' prior attainment. These low results were in contrast to a number of occasions in recent years when the school performed better than similar schools. This decline in standards is explained partly by the substantial number of Year 6 pupils in 2004 who had special educational needs and who were eligible for free school meals. The small

number of pupils in each year group, however, means that results do fluctuate from year to year. Standards in Year 2 are now average in speaking and listening and in mathematics. Pupils are achieving well in reading but standards in writing are variable and below average overall. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is broadly average in English and mathematics; it is well below average in science. Standards are average in religious education and below average in information and communication technology. Pupils produce some good work in art, benefit in music from the teaching of a specialist in the subject, and in physical education from coaching by Arsenal Football Club. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; those for whom English is an additional language reach similar standards to their peers.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their moral, social and cultural development, are good. Spiritual development is satisfactory but the school could do more to promote this aspect of pupils' development. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relate well with one another and with their teachers. Very effective promotion of attendance means that the attendance rate is now satisfactory, as is punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education overall, with particular strengths in the way it cares for pupils and in the good teaching and learning. A wide range of clubs and educational visits enrich an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the community are good; those with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership. Others in posts of responsibility fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily overall: the leadership and management of English and mathematics are very good; co-ordination of science is unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory but governors are less closely involved in supporting - and especially monitoring - the work of the school than they might be.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Based on the limited number of parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection, parents are generally satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. Pupils have positive views about the school and take advantage enthusiastically of the opportunities it provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in science throughout the school and improve co-ordination of the subject.
- Improve the promotion of children's communication and language in the nursery and their writing in the reception class.
- Ensure that a system for assessing and tracking pupils' achievement is in place in science, religious education and in other subjects.
- Develop further the governing body's role in supporting the school and in monitoring its work.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that an act of collective worship is made available for all pupils on a daily basis.
- Appoint a governor with responsibility for overseeing special educational needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils join the school with below average prior attainment and achieve satisfactorily to reach standards that are below average overall. There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Pupils do not reach the standards that they should in science and there is evidence of underachievement.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in mathematical development, in personal, social and emotional development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Opportunities are missed for promoting language and communication skills in the nursery and for extending writing skills in the reception class.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in acquiring the language.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and sometimes very well when they receive intensive support individually or in small groups.

Commentary

1. By the time children move up from the reception class into Year 1, most are likely to meet the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. This represents good achievement in these areas. Overall achievement in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory, however, because children make a slow start in the development of speaking skills in the nursery and in writing skills in the reception class. As a result, their achievement in communication, language and literacy is unsatisfactory and children are unlikely to meet national expectations in writing by the time they move up from the reception class into Year 1. Assessment information from 2004 indicates that those children who joined Year 1 at the beginning of this academic year had also underachieved in communication, language and literacy. As a result, teachers in Years 1 and 2 are obliged to spend time making up for lost time in the development of basic writing skills that should be acquired in the Foundation Stage: this is undermining the school's efforts to raise standards in writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.2 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	9.9 (14.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.5 (16.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Compared with schools nationally in 2004, National Curriculum test results in Year 2 placed the school in the bottom five per cent in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Teachers' assessment showed that pupils had reached average standards in science. Based on eligibility for free school meals, these results were well below those of similar schools in reading and in the bottom five per cent in writing. Although overall results

were below those of similar schools in mathematics, this was because far fewer pupils reached Level 3 than in those schools; results at Level 2 were at least in line with similar schools. These results marked a significant decline from those of the previous year, partly because the pupils who took Year 2 tests in 2004 included a high proportion with special educational needs, including some with complex needs, and with English as an additional language. The results were also adversely affected by staffing difficulties at the time in the Year 2 class. The school has been closely monitoring these pupils' response to a range of special programmes introduced to raise their attainment: findings of the monitoring are positive and show they are now progressing at an appropriate rate.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.9 (26.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	22.4 (25.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	24.8 (27.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. National Curriculum test results in Year 6 placed the school in the bottom five per cent compared with schools nationally in English, mathematics and science, and the school did not meet its targets. Results were particularly low in English and science at Level 4 and in mathematics at Levels 4 and 5. Compared with similar schools based on pupils' prior attainment in earlier tests, these results were well below average overall in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils did better than those in similar schools at Level 5, suggesting that the school did well by its higher attaining pupils, whilst the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 was very low. The drop in standards indicated by these test results reflects a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and for whom English was an additional language, and a high level of eligibility for free school meals in the year group concerned. The loss of some higher attaining pupils to other schools during Years 5 and 6 and the arrival of lower attaining pupils in their place over the same period of time also adversely affected the test results. In recent years, the school has begun to see this movement of higher attaining pupils out of the school in Years 5 and 6, reflecting demographic trends in the locality and parents' attempts to secure the most advantageous places for their children's secondary education.
4. The trend in the school's Year 2 results was above the national trend from 1999 to 2003, but the low results in 2004 mean that the overall trend over the last five years has been below that nationally. The trend in Year 6 results was broadly in line with that nationally from 1999 to 2003, but it dropped below the national trend overall because of the low results in 2004. Overall, there has not been a significant difference between boys' and girls' test results in recent years.
5. In tests administered by the school soon after Christmas this year, pupils in Year 6 reached standards that were significantly higher than those gained in the 2004 tests: this augurs well for the 2005 test results. The attainment of the eldest pupils is now broadly average in English and mathematics as a result of good teaching, thorough assessment and very good leadership and management. Achievement in English and mathematics is good in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make very good progress in some lessons. Standards throughout the school vary from year to year in science, but pupils are performing less well in the subject than in English and mathematics. Where there is underachievement in science, this stems from teachers' lack of knowledge of aspects of the subject, underdeveloped assessment practices and unsatisfactory co-ordination. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in English and mathematics; they do not consistently do as well as they should in science.

6. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below expectations by Year 6 because the school previously had technical difficulties, which have now been resolved. The school has a newly equipped computer suite and teachers are receiving further training to increase their knowledge of the subject. These developments have already begun to take effect, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily and standards are rising. Achievement is satisfactory in religious education: standards are in line with the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus in learning about religion but evidence shows that pupils' attainment is below expectations in learning from religion. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about pupils' achievement in the remaining subjects, since these were not inspected in full. It is clear, however, that pupils achieve well in art and design and produce some high quality work. They benefit from specialist teaching in music, and gain significantly in physical education from the coaching provided by Arsenal Football Club.
7. As a result of good teaching and very good support from teaching assistants, pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well in acquiring English and attain overall standards that are similar to those reached by their peers. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress indicates that those who join the school with little English make good progress. As these pupils move up the school, the gap between their standards and those of their English-speaking peers narrows.
8. The school has good systems for analysing performance by ethnicity, although the number of pupils in each ethnic group is too small to draw meaningful conclusions from this. The school found from its analysis of performance data for the last three years that the attainment of the small number of Turkish pupils' had tended to remain lower than that of their peers. To remedy this, it has introduced strategies such as a Saturday homework club with support from outside agencies and uses the services of a Turkish-speaking teaching assistant to support pupils. The inspection found no difference in the achievement of pupils based on ethnicity: those from ethnic minority and traveller groups achieve as well as their peers and reach similar standards.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. The achievement of these pupils is similar to their peers in lessons, because they are supported effectively. Although work is not always matched to their needs as well as it could be in some lessons, they make good – and sometimes very good - progress towards their individual education plan targets through the support they receive from the special educational needs co-ordinator.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes and behave very well. Their personal and moral, social and cultural development is good and their spiritual development is satisfactory. The rate of attendance has improved and is now in line with national expectations and most pupils are punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes and very good behaviour have a positive effect on their learning.
- Monitoring of attendance is very good.
- The ethnically diverse pupils harmonise well and respect each others' differences.
- Pupils enjoy good relationships with staff and each other.
- Pupils' personal development is good, though their spiritual development is a relative weakness.

Commentary

10. Pupils are happy and want to come to school because they enjoy learning and feel valued as members of the school community. Pupils behave very well because the school has a very effective behaviour policy, which is consistently applied throughout, and the pupils respond very positively to this. There has been considerable improvement in pupils' behaviour in some classes, and pupils in those classes take great pride in behaving well and themselves stress

how this benefits their learning. The atmosphere in the school is lively but orderly and purposeful. Parents and pupils are confident that the school is successful in discouraging bullying, harassment and racism and deals with this effectively because of the consistently applied anti-bullying policy. There were no exclusions during the last year.

11. Pupils' personal development is good because they are encouraged to take on responsibility for their own learning through the many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. They co-operate very well and are eager to take on positions of responsibility and do so with growing maturity. Provision for pupils' social, moral, and cultural development is good across all areas. Emphasis is given to celebrating and appreciating the many varied cultures within the school, through initiatives such as Black History Month and Identity Week, which span several subjects, and circle time. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and it is clear that pupils are moved to a state of wonder and led to a position where they value themselves and others, but spiritual experiences are not a regular, planned part of the curriculum. The school does not comply with statutory requirements for providing a daily act of collective worship – although this was an issue for development in the last inspection - and spiritual awareness is not always fostered as much as it should be in religious education.
12. Relationships between pupils are good, as confirmed by pupils and parents, because pupils are encouraged to work together in lessons and team sports and the school goes to great lengths to ensure cohesion between different ethnic groups. Respect and care for others are greatly valued and pupils appreciate this: the training of Year 5 pupils as playground buddies is a good example. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive because of a relaxed and friendly approach in which teachers are known by their first names but still command the respect of pupils.
13. Attendance has improved this year, with reduced levels of unauthorised absence, and is now satisfactory because of the very good monitoring systems and a very good partnership with the Education Welfare Officer. Good attendance and punctuality are promoted very well through the weekly class attendance and punctuality cups. As a result, most pupils now arrive on time - an improvement since the last report - and the school is quick to offer support if parents have difficulty in ensuring their children are punctual.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	1.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality education overall, with particular strengths in the way it cares for pupils and in the successful establishment of a learning culture. As a result, teaching is now good, especially in English and mathematics, although these strengths are not yet apparent in science. A wide range of clubs and educational visits enrich an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the community are good; those with other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes and good in Years 1 to 6. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall, reflecting the considerable emphasis that has been placed on establishing a learning culture through extensive staff training.
- Teaching is good in English and mathematics, ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and pupils, in their turn, work purposefully and enthusiastically.
- Good support is provided by teachers and support staff for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language.
- Assessment is very good in English and good in mathematics; it is unsatisfactory in science and religious education and underdeveloped in a number of non-core subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	9 (29%)	15 (48%)	7 (23%)	-	-	-

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

14. Teaching and learning were at least good in three out of four lessons seen, with very good teaching in nearly one in four lessons. Teaching was satisfactory in the remaining lessons. Teaching is good in English and mathematics, and the very good lessons seen were almost exclusively in these two subjects. In science lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory but pupils' work shows that teachers lack knowledge of some aspects of the subject and assessment information is not used as well as it should be in planning work for different groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall in information and communication technology and in religious education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage: good teaching occurs in a number of areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes, although teaching is unsatisfactory in communication, language and literacy.
15. Since the last inspection, the school has done a great deal to develop pupils' learning skills and to establish a culture in which teachers and pupils, alike, value learning. This has led to a number of consistent strengths in teaching. Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and frequently make them aware of what they need to do to meet the criteria by which their work will be assessed. The very good use of interactive white boards, newly installed in Years 1 to 6, provides a strong visual element to the content of lessons, helping pupils with special educational needs and those acquiring English as an additional language in particular to understand what is required of them. Pupils have many opportunities to ask and answer questions in lessons, and they are practised in discussing work with their peers through the 'talk partners' system.¹ Teachers have positive attitudes towards diversity of languages in their classes and this adds significantly to the confidence of bilingual pupils. Successful strategies such as repetition of vocabulary and presentation of work with a strong visual content support these pupils well.
16. Highly effective procedures are used to manage pupils' behaviour, so that teachers are able to give pupils the freedom to discuss their work animatedly, yet instantly regain their attention. In response to this, pupils have a refreshingly positive attitude: they show a genuine enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to apply themselves to the tasks they are given. They concentrate hard and work purposefully, especially in English and mathematics lessons, often focusing on the task in hand for the entire lesson without becoming distracted. The interest in

¹ This is a system whereby all members of the class have designated partners with whom they regularly talk about new information or tasks they have been given

learning amongst the teachers and pupils is evident in the exciting displays in classrooms and communal areas: these celebrate and stimulate learning, contributing much to the positive ethos of the school.

17. Where teaching is very good, the consistent strengths found in all lessons are underpinned by a thorough understanding of the subject which leads teachers to ask probing and varied questions that get all pupils thinking deeply. The best practice is found in the Year 5 class, where teaching and learning regularly include excellent features. Pupils in this class – many of whom had a previous history of learning and behavioural difficulties - say that they 'love all their lessons'. Very good teaching is also found in some other classes in English and mathematics.
18. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, this is nearly always because teachers are not entirely confident in the subject matter. A number of strengths are present in these lessons so that pupils behave and collaborate well, understand what is expected of them and usually get through a reasonable amount of work in the allotted time. However, the subject content in these lessons either lacks depth, as revealed by some work in religious education, or is not explained sufficiently or structured effectively, as in some work and lessons in science. Occasionally, teachers do not match work well enough to the range of learning needs and prior attainment in the class, although they do make very good use of well-trained teaching assistants to support pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. Staff in the nursery do not consistently model language, use visual prompts or provide as many opportunities for speaking as they should. Children in the reception class miss some important opportunities for promoting the next steps in developing children's writing skills. In both instances, this is mainly because staff do not make sufficient use of their detailed observations of children's attainment to determine the next stage in learning for individuals and groups of children.
19. Assessment is very good in English and good in mathematics. Learning targets are in place and regularly reviewed in these subjects, and ongoing assessment informs the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils are given an overall assessment twice a year to check that they are on track to fulfil their potential, and the resulting information is being used to very good effect to identify pupils who require additional help. The analysis of performance data is equally thorough in English and mathematics and is used in planning the curriculum, as well as in identifying where staff require additional training. These practices are leading to secure gains in achievement. Assessment - and particularly its use - is at a much earlier stage of development in science. Assessment is developing appropriately in information and communication technology and pupils are being increasingly involved in evaluating their own progress. Assessment is underdeveloped in religious education, although teachers include references to assessment opportunities in their planning. In the other subjects, opportunities for assessment are built into curriculum plans but there is still no system for recording pupils' attainment and, thus, for using the resulting information in planning future work: this remains an area for development from the last inspection.
20. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is assessed well and their stages of language acquisition are determined and recorded appropriately. Assessment information is also used effectively to formulate individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. These plans usually contain clear, achievable and challenging targets. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language and who have special educational needs is tracked and monitored carefully against their targets. The school makes effective use of performance data in planning to meet individual needs and in providing additional support for these pupils where required.

The curriculum

A wide range of clubs and educational visits enrich an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is more effective in some areas than others in promoting pupils' optimum achievement and development.
- A number of intervention strategies are helping to raise standards, especially for those pupils who need additional help.
- A varied programme of enrichment activities supports pupils' learning.
- The resources at the school's disposal – staffing, accommodation and learning resources – make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.

Commentary

21. The curriculum has a number of strengths and the weakness found at the time of the last inspection - whereby pupils spent insufficient time in lessons - has been rectified. Learning opportunities provided are appropriately broad and balanced, enabling pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics and to develop well personally. The curriculum does not, however, enable all pupils to achieve well in all subjects and areas of learning or to develop all of their capabilities equally. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall but learning opportunities are not as good as they should be in communication, language and literacy. Further adjustments are needed in the science curriculum to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential. Opportunities for pupils to develop as spiritual - as well as social, intellectual and physical - beings are not planned sufficiently within the curriculum. The fact that the school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship reflects a lack of clarity in providing for this aspect of pupils' development.
22. Nevertheless, the school offers a very good range of learning opportunities out of hours, many of these led by specialists, which clearly enrich pupils' learning and help to promote their positive attitudes to school. Pupils have opportunities to attend a number of clubs, including art, drama, dance (ballet and street dance), football, French, and information and communication technology. They sing in the choir and have lessons from a peripatetic piano teacher. Specialist sports coaching is provided by Arsenal Football Club, pupils have watched skipping and aerobic demonstrations and taken part in workshops. Drama teaching is supported by a theatre company and there are also other visiting theatre groups. Pupils' learning has benefited from work with artists-in-residence and visiting musicians, and educational visits include an annual school journey for pupils in Years 4 to 6.
23. Pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds are integrated very well socially and are supported well in acquiring English. A full-time teaching assistant, who has been appointed to provide additional support in learning subject-related vocabulary for pupils at early stages in acquiring English, withdraws pupils for intensive group tuition. The school provides a curriculum that reflects other cultures positively. Pupils are given good opportunities to gain confidence about their own and other cultures through assemblies, religious education, Black History Month, geography, music, art and celebrations such as breaking the fast at Eid.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator does not teach a class so is able to use her time flexibly to provide one-to-one and group support for pupils who need it, drawing appropriately on the support of a range of outside agencies. The quality of the support within the learning support base is very good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also accelerated by the effective use of a range of specialised teaching programmes so that they quickly gain in knowledge and skills and become confident learners. A range of intervention programmes target pupils who need additional support with literacy and numeracy, including Easter and Summer schools. The school has been working with advisors from CEA@Islington to ensure that gifted and talented pupils are appropriately challenged: provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory and developing.

25. As well as being involved in a range of opportunities through the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities, senior managers are active in becoming involved in any initiative that is likely to raise standards or that contributes to developments in education. For instance, Gillespie is currently the lead school in the Primary Strategy Learning Network for raising boys' achievement in writing. In personal, social and health education, the school has been involved in developing a new scheme of work with CEA@Islington and teachers from other schools have visited Gillespie to observe model lessons.
26. The school is fully staffed with permanent teachers who are competent to teach most subjects. Subject co-ordinators are generally deployed to reflect their subject knowledge. The very good number of skilled non-teaching assistants ensures that all pupils have access to the curriculum and are fully included in all activities. The school is well ahead with implementing the workforce reforms so that teachers are not obliged to spend too much of their time on administrative tasks. The learning environment is bright, spacious and stimulating. At the time of the last inspection, there was no outside play area for children in the reception class. These children now have opportunities to use the nursery playground for some of the time and to join in with older children at break times. A stimulating playground is provided for pupils in Years 1 to 6, including structures, a stage, quiet areas, and various mini-pitches for a variety of sports. The school is at least adequately resourced for all subjects and very well resourced in information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

The school offers its pupils very good care and good support and guidance in a safe and supportive environment. Support for pupils' personal development is very good and support for academic development is satisfactory. The school seeks pupils' views well and values their suggestions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care and welfare procedures support pupils very well.
- Pupils' personal development is supported very well; support for academic development is more variable because assessment is underdeveloped in some subjects.
- Pupils know that their views are valued.
- Induction procedures are good.

Commentary

27. Pastoral care supports pupils very well because Gillespie School has a very caring ethos and staff tackle problems effectively. Teaching assistants work in both the classroom and the playground offering continuity of care. Support for and monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good because of clear guidelines through policies, which ensure consistency across the school concerning matters such as behaviour, child protection, first aid and health and safety. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well and work together as a team, encouraging pupils to develop confidence and high self-esteem. A very good example of pupils' increasing confidence was seen during an assembly led by Year 2 pupils, in which the whole class gave a very assured and entertaining performance to parents and pupils. The school's NSPCC counsellor and art therapists provide further support for individual pupils who are experiencing problems. They are helped to express themselves and develop greater personal understanding.
28. Academic achievement is monitored and supported satisfactorily but assessment is not fully in place in all subjects, and the school is in the process of introducing computer software to assist in the tracking of pupils' progress. The tracking of pupils' progress is currently much better in English and mathematics than in other subjects. There is good support for underachieving pupils through the learning mentor, who devises individual programmes for pupils to help overcome any barriers to learning such as their lack of organisational skills.

29. Pupils know that their views are supported and respected because they have an effective school council whose suggestions are taken very seriously and acted upon. Pupils' views have also been canvassed through a questionnaire. The school council has recently been involved in discussions with governors and school caterers about the content of school lunches and is initiating further correspondence on the issue. A positive development emerging from this is the introduction of a breakfast club as part of the Healthy Schools Initiative.
30. Pupils quickly settle in to school when they join because the induction procedures have been well thought through and are to be used as guidance for other schools on the local authority website. One or two parents expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of induction but this was linked to the staffing arrangements in Reception rather than to the induction procedures.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Information and opportunities for regular contact between home and school are good, especially in Years 1 to 6. Parental involvement in pupils' learning and parents' support for the school are satisfactory overall. Links with the local community are good and there are satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the local community extend pupils' opportunities for learning well.
- Good quality information and regular opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress keep parents well informed; information on specific developments is not always as good as it should be in the Foundation Stage.
- Parents' support through attending school events is good but active support through the Friends Association is more limited.
- The regularity of homework is consistent with the homework policy but the quality of homework is inconsistent.

Commentary

31. It is difficult to gain an accurate reflection of parents' views because few parents responded to the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting. The partnership overall appears to be satisfactory. Although parents are clearly comfortable about approaching the school, are positive about the school's warm and inviting ethos and feel the school is responsive, a number are unhappy, particularly in the Foundation Stage, about the level of consultation. Much of this dissatisfaction seems to be linked to the changes in staffing arrangements that took place early in the Autumn term in the reception class, where the teaching is shared.
32. Information for parents about their child's progress is good because parents have the opportunity to talk to teachers each day so that they can discuss any concerns at an early stage. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to become involved in the review of their child's individual education plan targets, which takes place at review meetings twice a year. Most parents are pleased to take advantage of these opportunities for their child's benefit. Termly consultation meetings give all parents the opportunity to discuss their children's progress and this is supported by good quality annual reports. Parents of children in the reception class do not like the format of reports, because they differ from those in other classes, but the information given is sound. General information is also good because communications such as the school prospectus, the newsletters and website are informative. Curriculum information for each class is sent at the beginning of term.
33. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory and they are being encouraged to play a more informed and active role through the family learning initiative, workshops for parents of pupils in Years 5 and 6 and information and communication technology workshops for those in Years 1 and 2. Homework, although given in accordance with the homework timetable, is not always of a consistently high quality. Parents' support for the school is

satisfactory because a few parents help regularly in the younger classes, but active participation in the Friends' Association is limited to just a few parents. Many parents, though, do attend events organised by the school and Friends, and the school makes every effort to involve parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language. A good example was the breaking fast organised by Muslim parents who cooked breakfast for over a hundred pupils and parents at the end of Ramadan. This event was so successful it is to be held annually.

34. The school has several well-established links with the local community, which extend pupils' learning. A particular strength is the link with Arsenal Football Club, which is very close by and provides football coaching for pupils in Years 4 and 5 and opportunities for pupils and parents to attend information and communication technology workshops. The links with local secondary schools are satisfactory: the school has set up some curriculum links with two schools but pupils go on to several schools so it is very difficult to establish close links with them all.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership. Others in posts of responsibility fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily overall.

Governance is satisfactory but governors are less closely involved in supporting - and especially monitoring - the work of the school than they might be.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis has been given to raising standards, with very good leadership and management in English and mathematics, and staff have very good opportunities to extend their skills through training.
- Initiatives aimed at raising standards in science have not been focused sufficiently on existing weaknesses, and leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- The leadership of pastoral aspects of the school's work – especially the management of pupils' behaviour and care is very good.
- The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are good.
- Art, music and physical education are co-ordinated well and a good start has been made in the co-ordination of information and communication technology.
- Governors raise some useful questions and support senior managers on some issues but do not monitor the school's work as closely as they might.

Commentary

35. Senior managers' involvement in an initiative for developing the leadership of the school has supported them in the development of a shared vision for the future, which is reflected well in the school improvement plan. The intention to develop a learning culture for pupils and staff has to a great extent been realised. The positive effects of this are evident in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics but not yet in science. Decisive action taken following the dip in National Curriculum test results in 2004, when the headteacher requested the close involvement of CEA@Islington, has led to positive developments and an increase in the knowledge and understanding of many of the staff. Through working closely with external advisers, the headteacher and other managers have developed their skills in checking the effectiveness of teaching and in evaluating the school's overall performance. The leadership of teaching is a particular strength and has led to the high proportion of good teaching and learning seen during this inspection.
36. The leadership and management of English and mathematics are very good. These co-ordinators, who are also senior managers, provide very effective support for other teachers, analyse assessment data thoroughly, track pupils' achievement and ensure that provision is of good quality. In contrast, the co-ordination of science is unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievement

and the quality of provision are not monitored sufficiently in science, and support sought from the local education authority has not accurately reflected all of the areas of weakness revealed by the 2004 test results. As a result, the support provided - though useful in itself - has not fully addressed the need to raise standards in science.

37. Special educational needs and English as an additional language are both led and managed effectively. The leadership and management of provision in the Foundation Stage and of religious education are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator for information and communication technology has made a good start in developing the subject. Apart from religious education, other subjects were only sampled as part of the inspection, so it is not possible to judge the effectiveness of leadership and management in most of these, but it is clear that co-ordinators have been given good opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Art and design and music are both co-ordinated well by enthusiastic specialists who are able to draw on their subject knowledge to support and guide their colleagues to the benefit of pupils. The leadership of pastoral aspects of the school's work is very good - notably the management of pupils' behaviour, the promotion of regular attendance and the way pupils are cared for. In these areas, the school's work is monitored and evaluated thoroughly, and the headteacher receives good support in this from other members of the senior management team.
38. The governing body operates appropriately through a range of committees, and a number of governors understand the implications of published performance data. They are, therefore, able to ask some challenging questions about pupils' achievement. They receive regular updates from the headteacher about the work of the school but, otherwise, have limited procedures in place for directly checking the school's effectiveness. There are no governors linked to particular subjects for monitoring purposes and there is currently no governor with responsibility - as required by law - for special educational needs. Governors act and negotiate on the school's behalf in some instances - for example, in attempting to improve the quality of school meals - but are not as closely involved in the workings of the school and in ensuring its quality as best practice would suggest or as many staff would appreciate. The governing body is, however, effectively involved in budgetary decisions and monitors spending through its finance committee.
39. The statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is still not met, although it was an issue for development at the time of the last inspection. Only limited progress has been made on this issue partly because the school is considering whether to apply for a determination to excuse it from the majority of acts of worship needing to be Christian in their focus. The failure to meet legal requirements also reflects a lack of understanding about how acts of worship might draw meaningfully upon the school's cultural diversity, as well as a reluctance to make assemblies overtly spiritual - as well as moral - in nature.
40. Spending per pupil is in line with that of other schools in the authority. Aspects of the school's work need to be improved but there are a number of key strengths, especially in English and mathematics and in the personal development and care of pupils. The school, therefore, gives satisfactory value for money. A significant amount of money was carried forward at the end of the last financial year, as the table below shows, but the school is able to explain this convincingly. Money has been put aside to retain the present staffing position in the face of a falling roll, extensive remodelling of the building is planned in response to the projected closure of the adjoining early years centre and refurbishment of the computer suite is planned.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	962,260.68	Balance from previous year	57,835.05
Total expenditure	916,788.18	Balance carried forward to the next	103,307.60
Expenditure per pupil	3,995.00		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, as is children's overall achievement. Children for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in the reception class was unsatisfactory; it is now satisfactory. Arrangements for settling in new children are good. Two part-time teachers share the reception class, and parents expressed concern about the discontinuity of learning and insecurity caused to young children when temporary teachers occasionally cover for the usual teachers. The school is planning to remedy the situation immediately and has appropriate arrangements for ensuring staff work together in planning the curriculum. Support staff generally make a very good contribution to children's learning in both the nursery and reception classes. At the time of the last inspection, there was no immediate access to a safe outside area for reception children; now children are given planned access to the outdoor play area. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, and the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very warm and supportive and children feel valued and are confident.
- Children are helpful to one another and are keen to behave well.

Commentary

41. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. The warmth of relationships and the respect adults show for children's views make all feel valued and they settle quickly into school activities. They learn to share resources and take turns, whether working and playing indoors or outdoors.
42. Children are eager to learn and find it easy to conform to the high standard of behaviour set by the staff. Children are appropriately active sometimes and at other times sit and concentrate on adult-focused activities. Occasionally, in whole group sessions in reception, children lose concentration and this takes the sparkle out of learning. The school values its cultural diversity and gives children good opportunities to learn about one another: staff provide many opportunities for them to work and play together in harmony. Children's attainment is likely to be in line with expectations by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities are missed for developing children's communication and language skills in the nursery.
- The writing skills of children in the reception class are not developed systematically enough.
- Reading skills are taught effectively through a phonic scheme and in guided reading sessions, but more able children are not always challenged.

Commentary

43. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is unsatisfactory overall in this area of learning because staff miss opportunities to promote children's speaking in the nursery and writing in the reception class. When children moved into Year 1 at the beginning of this academic year, their attainment was much lower in communication, language and literacy than in the other areas of learning. Their performance in this area of learning is still weaker than that in other areas. Children's attainment is likely to be below expectations in literacy by the end of the reception year and in line with expectations in communication and language.
44. When children join the nursery, their communication skills are markedly below expectations for their age. Greater emphasis, therefore, needs to be given to developing their vocabulary and speaking skills. Children in the nursery work quietly, however, for much of the time and staff do not model language or broaden their vocabulary sufficiently. They do not, for instance, teach children to speak in sentences but too readily accept nods and one-word answers. As a result, children do not make as much progress as they should. Children's speaking and listening skills are developing appropriately in reception.
45. Reading is taught regularly and most children know that words carry meaning but they are less confident in linking letters to make words. Staff regularly read stories to children, although they do not make as much use as they could of props, such as puppets, to give added support to children for whom English is an additional language. Higher attaining children read simple texts fluently but are not consistently given books that have an appropriate level of difficulty to further improve their reading skills. Letter sounds are taught well but during the inspection, opportunities to link this learning with reading and writing were missed in the reception class. Children use the writing area to practise writing skills. However, pointers for further improvement are not given and, as a result, children practise their existing skills and little new learning takes place. For example, a higher attaining child wrote a sentence within a few minutes and was not shown how to leave spaces between the words, or how to add more description and lengthen the story. Weaknesses in the teaching of literacy occur partly because teachers do not use their detailed observations of children's attainment to identify specific learning objectives or to set targets for individual children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities support children's mathematical development well.
- Games, rhymes and songs are used well to reinforce counting forwards and backwards.

Commentary

46. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. Number rhymes and songs reinforce children's counting skills in the nursery and most children can count beyond 20 in the reception class. Practical work, such as when children make mini-beasts with a given number of sticks and count their legs, extends learning. Higher attaining children can add and subtract objects to ten and learn to count forwards and backwards in twos. They play with the water and learn about the concept of 'heavy' and 'light' and 'more' and 'less'. Teachers support lower attaining children well by focusing questions appropriately, and picking up on errors sensitively and using them as a teaching point. Children develop a good knowledge of shape, can recognise some coins and can sort out large and small objects. Most children's attainment is likely to be in line with expectations by the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to draw conclusions from their investigations.
- They receive sufficient opportunities to use the computer to extend their learning.

Commentary

47. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement in this area of learning is good. Good use of materials - such as books, pictures and live caterpillars in the nursery and wood lice, snails and spiders in the reception - help to develop children's understanding of mini-beasts' habitats, how they walk and what they eat. Good use is made of the outdoor area to extend children's learning. Class computers are used well to practise learning in areas such as art, literacy and numeracy. Most children are likely to reach national expectations in this area by the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use a range of tools to develop their muscle control.
- They move with control and confidence when using the large equipment.

Commentary

48. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning. Access to outside learning is regular and much improved. This enables children to engage in large and expansive movements, for example, when they use wheeled toys. The staff allow children to be adventurous in climbing and balancing and jumping off the equipment, without jeopardising safety. In lessons in physical development in the hall, children have opportunities to use the small equipment and develop catching and throwing skills. Children use a satisfactory range of tools, including scissors, pastry cutters, rolling pins, wax crayons and paintbrushes. This supports the development of fine movements satisfactorily. Most children are on track to reach national expectations by the end of reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provides opportunities for children to sing, paint and role-play.
- Opportunities for children to develop self-expression in artistic activities are too few.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory. Children have good opportunities to explore ideas raised in stories; for example, after listening to the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar', they designed and made a fruit salad. They learn to sing simple songs in numeracy and literacy lessons. Children rehearse their own experiences in role-play, for example, they make cakes with play-dough and jellies in the water tray. Children have many

opportunities to dress up and role-play in the home corner. However, opportunities are missed to develop children's communication skills, as the children play around quietly without much conversation with adults or their peers. Art activities, such as making mini-beasts with play-dough, making caterpillars with pasta and drawing and painting are available. Sometimes, these lack inspiration and do not extend children's self-expression - for example, by encouraging them to select materials, tools and individual designs and not just to copy a design given by the staff. By the end of the reception year, children's attainment is likely to be broadly average for their age.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 1 to 6 and strategies employed to raise standards have led to a distinct increase in standards by Year 6.
- The low level of skills in children's writing when they move up from the reception class means that they have much catching up to do in Years 1 and 2.
- Assessment is very good and the resulting information is used well in planning the curriculum.
- The subject is led and managed very effectively, and teachers have had extensive opportunities to develop their skills through training and working with advisers from CEA@Islington.

Commentary

50. All pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 and 2. Standards are below average in writing by the end of Year 2 but average in speaking and listening. Very good improvement has been made in reading, through the school's use of a specialised programme, which focuses particularly on increasing pupils' phonic awareness. As a result, most pupils are competent readers by Year 2. Standards are rising in writing, in response to good teaching and learning, but teachers in Years 1 and 2 face an uphill struggle to bring pupils up to the expected level from their well below average attainment on entry to Year 1. In 2004, National Curriculum test results in reading and writing placed the school in the bottom five per cent nationally and were well below those of similar schools. Many pupils in this year group had special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school has put in place a range of additional procedures that are effectively supporting these pupils' learning.
51. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good, with very good progress evident, particularly in Year 5. Whereas National Curriculum test results in 2004 were well below the national average, recent teacher assessment shows that the proportion of pupils working at Level 5 is well above average; the proportion working at Level 4 is slightly below average. Standards are therefore broadly average overall, which represents very good improvement on the school's 2004 results, which were very low compared with the national average. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, who come from ethnic minority groups or who have special educational needs achieve well. As they move up through the school, those who are acquiring English increasingly reach standards similar to their peers.
52. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers consistently share learning objectives with pupils and in the best lessons they also explain clearly the criteria by which pupils' work will be assessed. They make very good use of interactive whiteboards and provide ample opportunity for pupils to work in pairs, discussing and extending their learning. This particularly benefits pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. A good combination of paired work and whole-class discussion also contributes significantly to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Lessons are lively and proceed at a

rapid pace, teachers' expectations are appropriately high, and pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Time is used to very good effect by teachers and pupils alike, so that pupils work productively and concentrate hard. Some find it difficult, however, to write independently without discussing their work with others – a fact that could easily lead pupils to perform less well than they might in tests. In most lessons, work is matched closely to pupils' prior attainment; where this is not the case, average attaining pupils are most disadvantaged since they typically work without the support necessarily afforded lower attaining pupils. Pupils' work shows that higher attaining pupils are doing particularly well in the subject, often receiving encouragement from marking that identifies what they need to do to reach even higher standards.

53. The subject is led and managed very well by a co-ordinator who models best practice in her own teaching. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and a range of monitoring procedures is in place to ensure teachers receive the support that they need. Thorough assessment and tracking of pupils' achievement have given rise to the introduction of a number of intervention strategies, which are already proving effective in raising standards and tackling any possible underachievement. Training opportunities are closely matched to necessary developments in the subject. Non-teaching staff are used to very good effect in supporting pupils: they are knowledgeable and very well trained. Improvement since the last inspection has been good: the strengths identified then have been sustained and other aspects of provision have been developed further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Much emphasis is placed on the development of an appropriate range of literacy skills in English, supported well by the use of a specialised programme for strengthening pupils' phonic understanding. This is beginning to raise literacy standards in reading and spelling. All subjects provide ample opportunity for pupils to develop their language skills through the practice of having a 'talking partner' with whom work is discussed. The use and development of pupils' writing skills are less well established across the curriculum. Pupils in this school have too few opportunities to write in the humanities subjects, of geography, history and religious education. This is partly because teachers place so much emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills but it means that writing skills are not receiving as much attention as they should in the curriculum as a whole, which runs counter to the school's intention of raising standards in writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- There are thorough arrangements in place to track pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is planned well, with a strong emphasis on pupils learning through using and applying mathematics in everyday situations.
- Very good leadership and management have led to significant improvements since the last inspection.

Commentary

55. Compared with schools nationally, National Curriculum test results in Year 2 were well below average in 2004. Although overall results were below those of similar schools, this was because far fewer pupils reached Level 3 than in those schools; results at Level 2 were at least in line with similar schools. These results were a significant drop on those of the previous year. National Curriculum test results in Year 6 placed the school in the bottom five per cent

nationally in 2004. Compared with similar schools, results in mathematics were well below average.

56. Standards are currently broadly average throughout the school and all pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in some lessons where they are supported very effectively and activities and resources are carefully matched to their learning needs. All staff motivate pupils by making good use of resources and challenge pupils, paying particular attention to developing their understanding of mathematical language.
57. Teaching and learning are good, and lessons are planned well. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the subject in explaining new material precisely and linking these to what pupils already know. Introductions to lessons are brisk and lively so that all pupils make good progress in their skills of quick mental recall. There is a strong emphasis on the development and use of mathematical language, particularly in problem solving, and pupils are provided with practical and interesting activities to ensure that learning is enjoyable. As a result, they develop understanding of new mathematical ideas quickly. Lessons are frequently based on the application of mathematics in everyday life, so that pupils use their own experiences to support their learning. Teachers have consistently high expectations, particularly through the use of challenging question and answer sessions - which include problem solving to develop pupils' thinking. Teachers make very good use of resources, including information and communication technology. They not only use the interactive whiteboards for teaching but also encourage pupils to use these to show others how they have arrived at a particular answer. As a result, all pupils are highly motivated and keen to do their best.
58. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and clearly enjoy mathematical activities, especially using and applying mathematics. They work very productively together in pairs and small groups, sharing and taking turns, and all pupils handle resources properly. The subject therefore makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development.
59. Procedures for recording the attainment of pupils and tracking their progress are good. The school not only uses and analyses optional National Curriculum tests to track and record pupils' progress, it also sets a range of year group targets, according to group capabilities, clearly displaying these on the walls of each classroom, so that pupils can see them. As a result, pupils know exactly what they must do to move on with their learning. The marking of pupils' work is not always consistent, however, as pupils in some classes receive better guidance than in other classes as to how they might improve their work.
60. Leadership and management are very good and this has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Numeracy planning and pupils' work are monitored regularly. All teachers are given feedback, with any relevant development points. The subject leader observes lessons to monitor the overall quality of teaching and learning, and ensures that teachers accommodate the needs of different groups of pupils effectively. A range of support strategies is in place for pupils, including booster classes, and teachers have had very good opportunities to develop their own skills. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving and standards are rising.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. They use co-ordinates in geography to locate various positions on a map, they use timelines in history to put famous people and significant events into chronological order and they use standard measures in scientific investigations, recording their findings in tables and graphs. In music, pupils keep time and in physical education they increase their spatial awareness in travelling and in controlling the direction of the ball in team games, such as football.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, standards are well below the national average.
- Some pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, are not achieving as well as they should.
- Some good recent developments have not yet had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and there has been insufficient improvement in science since the last inspection.

Commentary

62. Teacher assessments showed that Year 2 pupils in 2004 reached average standards in science. However, National Curriculum test results in Year 6 placed the school in the bottom five per cent compared with schools nationally. Results were particularly low in science at Level 4. Compared with similar schools, these results were well below average. Currently, standards in Year 6 are still well below average.
63. There is clear evidence from the school's self-evaluation that some pupils are underachieving in science and inspection findings agree with this. For example, the results of the mock National Curriculum tests in Year 6, held in February 2005, clearly show that pupils' overall performance in science is well below that in English and mathematics. The main reason for the difference in achievement between science and the other core subjects is the lack of detailed and insightful analysis of test data to adequately target and address any shortcomings in pupils' learning. For example, investigative science was identified by the school as a weakness following the 2004 tests, yet pupils' performance in other aspects of science - such as materials and their properties and living things - was lower than their performance in investigations in Year 2 tests. The subject leader has rightly identified the need to further raise pupils' understanding and ability to interpret data across the school and to focus on the development of scientific vocabulary. Some weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and low expectations also account for pupils' underachievement.
64. Teaching was satisfactory overall in lessons seen during the inspection and pupils showed very positive attitudes to learning, particularly when carrying out investigations. Weaknesses in teaching were evident, however, from the scrutiny of pupils' work. There have been some very recent positive developments in order to improve teaching and learning and raise standards, but these have yet to affect standards. The school is working closely with the science consultant from CEA@Islington to provide training with a particular focus on scientific investigations. Though clearly valuable in itself, this has largely focused on Years 3 to 6 when teachers in Years 1 and 2 are also in need of support. Improvements in teachers' planning are clearly evident with a much sharper focus on the development of scientific investigations. There has also been good recent development in recording pupils' attainment but assessment information is not being used sufficiently. In every class, pupils carry out an investigation as teachers observe and ask them questions to determine their skills of scientific enquiry. This information is then used to set targets and track progress but teachers are not consistently using assessment information to match work to individual needs, which limits the achievement of particular groups of pupils. This was clearly evident in pupils' work where higher attaining and lower attaining pupils had been given the same tasks and carried out the same investigations. As a result, work set for lower attaining pupils was often too difficult and the learning of higher attaining pupils was not extended sufficiently.
65. Unsatisfactory leadership and management overall have resulted in underachievement in science and insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Although the school has taken

action by involving CEA@Islington in an attempt to raise standards, effective and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning and thorough analysis of performance data have yet to be established.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 but are rising throughout the school.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving as staff become more confident in their subject knowledge.
- The information and communication technology suite is very well resourced and all classes from Years 1 to 6 have interactive white boards that are used very well.
- The new co-ordinator has made a good start in leading and managing the subject.

Commentary

66. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are lower than national expectations because the school has had technical problems in the past and teaching of control technology has received less emphasis than other areas. Now, a computer suite is well established, and the co-ordinator has provided in-service training and is supporting less confident staff. A new scheme of work that covers all aspects of the curriculum in depth is being implemented and this is helping to raise standards. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language, and who are from different ethnic minority backgrounds is similar to that of their peers. The achievement of higher attaining pupils has been promoted well through enrichment activities that have enabled them to work with a specialist in information and communication technology.
67. Pupils in Year 2 combine graphics and text in their writing. They alter the font and style of script and know how to delete mistakes. They design pictures in the style of famous artists. Most pupils in Year 6 combine text and graphics for PowerPoint presentations and are competent at importing graphics from the Internet. They use spreadsheets and write formulae to find the perimeters and areas of rectangles. Pupils experience a range of opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills in word-processing, graphics, using CD-ROMs the Internet, and data handling. However, control technology has not received appropriate emphasis in the past, and pupils' skills are underdeveloped; more work on this is planned for next term.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the two lessons observed, teachers had a good understanding of pupils' previous learning and they built on this effectively. Teachers plan lessons well and pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. Teaching assistants work closely with pupils who have special educational needs and those who are acquiring English as an additional language. Teachers place lower attaining pupils with more capable partners so that all pupils are included and achieve well. All staff use the interactive white boards very well to demonstrate and explain work and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
69. All staff have received training and less confident teachers are being supported well by the co-ordinator through monitoring and advice. Assessment in the subject is satisfactory: all teachers assess work at the end of each unit and a system for pupils to record their own assessments is the next priority. The school has maintained satisfactory provision since the previous inspection. Resources have recently become very good although standards are below those at the time of the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology skills in English and mathematics and satisfactory use in several curriculum areas. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets to write formulae and communicate findings in graphic and tabular forms. Pupils in Year 1 displayed the results of their findings about their favourite food in a pictogram. Pupils use word processing skills to write stories, poems and journals. Those in Year 6 have produced highly effective front pages for a school newspaper, *The Gillespie Times*. Pupils in Year 3 have used computers well for matching pictures to music, and for producing computerised pictures after the Pointillists. The Internet is used to research information for history and geography topics.

HUMANITIES

It was only possible to sample **geography** and **history**. It is, therefore, impossible to make an overall judgement about provision, teaching and learning in these subjects. Only one lesson in each of geography and history was observed. Scrutiny of pupils' written work and work on display and discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicate that standards in history and geography are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of pupils' time in the school and that National Curriculum requirements are met.

71. In a Year 2 history lesson, teaching and learning were good and pupils were developing skills in using evidence. They explored sources of evidence to find out about what their school was like 50 years' ago. Pupils showed good understanding of the past and present and used their previous learning about *Pepys' Diary* as a good source of evidence to find information about The Great Fire of London. Teacher's planning was good, pupils knew what was expected of them and the lesson was linked well to previous learning.
72. In geography, pupils in Year 5 were comparing and contrasting two localities. Good use was made of pictures of Brighton and London to compare physical features of these localities. Very good use was made of the interactive white board to display pictures and maps. Teaching and learning in the lesson were good because of the review of previous learning, good planning and the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to talk about different religions but insufficient opportunities to respond individually by expressing their ideas in writing.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good, but teachers tend to concentrate on facts about religions rather than deepening pupils' understanding of how religion relates to daily life.
- Assessment is underdeveloped in the subject, and opportunities for enriching pupils' learning are not built into the curriculum sufficiently.

Commentary

73. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Standards are broadly in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus in learning about religion but below average in learning from it. The coverage of the latter is variable and older pupils in particular have too few opportunities to express their personal feelings, ideas and beliefs about spiritual and ethical issues in writing. Some good pieces of written work have been produced, showing that pupils have the capacity to reflect on factual information and apply it to their own experiences and understanding, but opportunities

to do so are limited. A particular lack of written work is evident in Year 6. Pupils throughout the school do, nevertheless, gain a sound knowledge of the key features of world religions and have some opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills, most typically by retelling religious stories.

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers share learning objectives effectively with pupils and make good use of the interactive whiteboards to bring learning to life. Emphasis is placed on discussion and pupils readily talk about what they have learned. They show interest in the subject and apply themselves well to tasks they are given. Many pupils have a strong religious background and they show respect for and interest in others' faiths; this 'resource' is not tapped as much as it could be in the planning and teaching of the subject. Examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection - for instance, in Years 3 and 5 - but across the school, pupils' work and teachers' planning for individual lessons show that teachers are not entirely secure in their knowledge of the subject. As a result, they cover the topics required by the Local Agreed Syllabus, yet too superficially to enable pupils to achieve well and the subject does not contribute as much as it should to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers incorporate assessment criteria into their planning, although they do not systematically record what pupils know, understand and can do.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Limited improvement has taken place in the subject since the last inspection because it has not been a development priority. The new co-ordinator, who took over a few months ago, shows enthusiasm for improving provision. She has identified a number of appropriate priorities for development and has begun to undertake relevant training and to support other teachers in their planning. Monitoring of the subject is not yet formal or extensive enough, however, and the lack of an effective assessment system means that pupils' achievement can neither be tracked nor provision properly evaluated. A good range of artefacts supports learning, and recent opportunities have been provided for some year groups to visit a place of worship. A significant number of Muslim parents led a breaking of the fast at the end of Ramadan, explaining the significance of this to pupils. Otherwise, the school is not making as much use as it could of visitors into school - particularly representatives from the range of different faith communities - or of trips to places of worship in the locality to enrich and extend pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Insufficient evidence was seen to make meaningful judgements about provision, achievement or teaching in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. These subjects were sampled primarily by exploring the role of the subject co-ordinator, and selectively scrutinising pupils' work in their books and on display. A lesson was observed in art and design and part of a lesson in music, but it was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology or physical education.

76. In **art and design**, pupils reach standards that are at least in line with national expectations by the time they leave the school and produce some pieces of work that are of high quality. Although only one lesson was observed in art and design, a wide range of work on display, together with the good leadership and management provided by a specialist in the subject, make it clear that pupils often make good progress in the subject. Artwork on display is varied and it is clear that lessons promote a range of skills and creativity. High quality work is evident particularly in Year 2. The community is used very well, including use of artists-in-residence, to enrich and extend pupils' learning, and pupils have very good opportunities to extend their skills through attendance at a number of art clubs.
77. Very limited evidence was available in **design and technology** and it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. Curriculum planning suggests that the school is meeting National Curriculum requirements, and the subject is led by a teacher whose qualifications include relevant subject expertise. A small amount of work available for scrutiny, as well as findings from the co-ordinator's own monitoring, suggests that teachers are not all

entirely confident in their knowledge of the subject. This was evident in pupils' work in designing and making, though insufficient work was seen to form a clear judgement about standards.

78. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their learning in music. In assemblies, pupils sing with confidence and enjoyment, keeping in tune and in time to the music. Visits from music specialists, such as African drummers, greatly extend pupils' knowledge of music from different cultural traditions and the school choir provides good opportunities to develop pupils' singing abilities. Pupils perform in musical productions for the whole school community and do so with great interest and enjoyment. They have the opportunity to study the piano with a visiting music teacher and pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from being taught by a music specialist, who also provides good co-ordination of the subject across the school.
79. There are very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning in physical education. Pupils benefit greatly from an excellent community link with Arsenal Football Club. All pupils in Years 4 and 5 receive professional football coaching at the club on a weekly basis in Arsenal's well-resourced gym. On successful completion of their training, pupils are presented with certificates signed by Arsenal football staff in recognition of their achievements. A teaching assistant, trained under the sports co-ordinator scheme, organises separate after-school football coaching clubs for girls and boys. Both the girls and boys have participated in friendly matches with other schools and have won every one of these so far. Pupils thoroughly enjoy sporting activities and show an excellent response to the opportunities provided. New playground facilities, which include a range of climbing frames and a separately marked area for team games are used extremely well by pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils practise their skills with great enthusiasm and are proud to show visitors what they have achieved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. Insufficient evidence was seen to make overall judgements about provision, pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching in personal, social and health education. Evidence from exploring the role of the coordinator and looking at detailed planning indicates that personal, social and health education is actively promoted across the school. The co-ordinator has attended a number of relevant courses and uses her increasing knowledge effectively to support and train her colleagues and to develop this aspect of the school's work. She worked alongside other personal, social and health education co-ordinators in the production of a new scheme of work for personal, social and health education in Islington, and has provided model lessons for teachers from other schools. In the one lesson observed, in Year 3, learning built effectively on previous work in science about bacteria and pupils were encouraged to recognise the importance of being responsible in order to prevent the spread of germs. Much emphasis is given to personal, social and health education topics within assembly and the school's positive ethos does a great deal to promote pupils' personal and social education. The school has hosted a number of visits by specialist agencies that have promoted pupils' learning about healthy living, care of the environment and drug awareness. Through the school council, pupils are given opportunities to discuss issues and to contribute to school development; this gives them a valuable experience of contributing as 'citizens' of the school community. They also develop awareness as citizens in a wider sense through raising money for various charities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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