

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Erith, Bexley

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101441

Headteacher: Mrs Rosemary Medhurst

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 18 - 20 October 2004

Inspection number: 267414

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	196
School address:	Northwood Place Yamton Way Erith Kent
Postcode:	DA18 4NH
Telephone number:	020 8310 2722
Fax number:	020 8310 7245
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Adrian Reeves
Date of previous inspection:	28/06/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Northwood is a community primary school. It is smaller than other primary schools, with 196 children from reception to Year 6. The school's intake is ethnically diverse and around half the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Over one quarter of children speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is high. The children's attainment on entry to the school is very low, particularly in language and mathematical skills. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of the families in the community are much less favourable than usual. Around one third of pupils has learning difficulties and four pupils have statements of special educational needs. These relate to general learning difficulties, autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties and to hearing impairment. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative. It provides childcare provision through a breakfast club for 20 children. Despite the commitment to developing staff, recruitment and retention of teachers remain significant issues.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship English as an additional language
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation stage
32573	Mary White	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It places a high priority on promoting good relationships and racial harmony amongst all children, many of whom join during the year and have significant social and learning difficulties. In this it is very successful. Pupils' achievement during their time in the school is satisfactory overall from a very low start. The pupils' poor language skills through the school have an adverse effect on standards in all subjects. Standards in the work seen are well below average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Leadership by the headteacher and the governance of the school are good, and management is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve well in reception, including those with special educational needs, because teaching is good; and children learning English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Standards overall are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6, but are likely to improve at Year 6 on the return of an experienced teacher.
- Relationships and pupils' attitudes towards school life are good.
- Monitoring procedures are not focused sufficiently on raising standards.
- The curriculum has several good features but the structure and development of topics is not fully effective.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan further lessons.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection with some good features. The subject co-ordinator for information and communication technology (ICT) is having a significant influence across the school because of his enthusiastic and thorough approach. All the weaknesses identified during the last inspection have been addressed through positive management. Provision in the Foundation Stage is now good. Standards in English and mathematics have improved and detailed schemes of work for music and physical education are in place; there is further work to do in design and technology. Appraisal procedures support members of staff and promote improvements. The working atmosphere in classes is usually good because staff combine warm relationships with clear expectations. The school's development plan provides a thorough basis for forward planning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	B	D	D
Mathematics	A	A	D	D
Science	D	B	E	E

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall because standards in the work seen in Year 6 are well below average. Inspection evidence shows that there was under-achievement in Year 6 last year, particularly in science, because elements of teaching were unsatisfactory, expectations were not high enough and monitoring procedures did not pick up weaknesses. Children's attainment on entry to the school is very low, particularly in their language and mathematical skills. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because teaching and provision are good although standards in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception are well below average. In Years 1 and 2 achievement is satisfactory. Pupils learn a good range of basic skills and often achieve well in

lessons through good teaching, for example in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Standards are well below average by Year 2 because many pupils need continual support. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make steady gains in their literacy, numeracy and other skills. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language and of the higher attaining pupils is satisfactory. The high level of pupils joining the school at different times during the year is a significant barrier to learning as well as the low level of English language skills of many children.

In the Year 6 tests of 2004, standards compared with schools having similar prior attainment in Year 2 were below average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. In comparison with schools having a similar proportion of free school meals standards were average in English and mathematics. Standards have fallen since 2003, when results in mathematics were in the top five per cent nationally in comparison with similar schools. The 2003 test results indicate that pupils achieved well to reach above average standards.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their interest in lessons and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have good attitudes towards school life and work, supported well by the school's good approach to including all pupils in activities. They are confident and relate well to each other with strong racial harmony throughout the school. The learning mentors play an important role in supporting pupils. Behaviour is satisfactory overall because a few pupils, mainly in Years 3 to 6, find it difficult to concentrate. Behaviour is very good in reception and good in Years 1 and 2. The level of attendance is below the national average but above the average for similar schools and has improved since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. It broadly maintains the position since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall because achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory and last year aspects of teaching in Year 6 were unsatisfactory. Provision, including teaching, in the Foundation Stage is good, an improvement since the last inspection, so that children achieve well. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, pupils have good experiences and make steady gains in skills. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory overall; it is currently stronger in Year 3. Teachers make perceptive observations of pupils' understanding during lessons but formal assessment is not used sufficiently to inform lesson planning. Recently appointed teachers are beginning to make a strong contribution although the influence of subject leaders has yet to have a consistent impact. The need to employ temporary teachers recently has adversely affected provision.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and there are good opportunities for enrichment through clubs and other activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school provides good care and welfare. The partnership with parents is good and with other schools and colleges it is very good. This has a strong impact on achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' personal development. The headteacher provides good leadership and direction for improvement. She and the deputy work together well. The governing body provides good governance by their strategic direction and ensuring that the school meets statutory requirements. Management is satisfactory because monitoring procedures are not sufficiently rigorous and focused on raising standards. The school's finances are managed effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and children have a good opinion of the school. Discussions with pupils and parents show that they feel teaching is good and the school provides good opportunities for the children to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Review the structure and development of the curriculum.

- Establish rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures in order to help raise standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Strengthen the role of subject co-ordinators.
- Ensure that appropriate assessment information is recorded and used in further planning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children in the reception class achieve well because provision is good. Their attainment on entry is very low, particularly in their language and mathematical skills, and they are on course to have well below average standards in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve satisfactorily. Standards overall are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of current work are well below average by Years 2 and 6.
- Children achieve well in reception.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT and reach broadly average standards by Year 6.
- Standards in the national tests at Year 6 for 2004 have fallen since the very good results of 2003.
- The use of teaching assistants is generally very good which often helps identified children to achieve well in lessons.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7))
writing	13.8 (12.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.2 (14.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.1 (28.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.3 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Pupils' performance at Year 2 in the 2004 national tests was well below average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. Performance was better in writing in comparison with similar schools since standards were average. Teachers rightly place a very strong emphasis on children's language and mathematical skills because these are significant areas of weakness for many children. The overall trend in standards is below the national trend to 2004 although the trend in writing since 2002 indicates good improvement.
2. At Year 6, pupils' performance in the 2004 national tests was below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below in science. In comparison with schools where pupils had a similar prior attainment when they were in Year 2, standards were also below average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. In comparison with schools

having a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Taking the three year averages from 2002 to 2004, mathematics and science show improved results and English results are the same for all three measures. This is because standards in 2004 were lower than in 2003, when results in mathematics were in the top five per cent nationally in comparison with similar schools. Previous results indicate that pupils achieved well to reach above average standards in the 2003 national tests. The trend in standards is above the national trend from 2000 to 2004. The work of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 provides a solid foundation for later learning because overall there is a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils exceeding the expectation at Year 6 compared with Year 2. This underlines the cumulative effects upon achievement of attention to pupils' individual learning needs, on building language skills and mostly effective teaching. The significant barriers to learning and the needs of many pupils are such that standards do not show much improvement by Year 2. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils achieve well in lessons since the classroom assistants give sensitive support. Pupils with English as an additional language make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage because the teacher gives a very good emphasis to spoken language and practical experience. In the rest of the school the achievement of pupils from ethnic minorities matches that of their peers. Standards at Years 2 and 6 also vary year by year since there are substantial variations between the attainments on entry of different year groups.

3. The lowering of standards at Year 6 in the 2004 national tests is partly explained by expected variations with small Year 6 cohorts and the higher number of pupils with special needs in 2004. Their lower achievement is also explained by some unsatisfactory elements of teaching in science where there was insufficient emphasis on experimental skills and poor marking. Monitoring procedures by senior members of staff to check on the quality of pupils' work and marking were not effective in identifying the weakness and improving achievement. Procedures to set pupils' targets are not sufficiently established and the targets are not clear enough so that sometimes too little is expected of the pupils.
4. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Few pupils are on course to reach the goals children are expected to meet by the end of reception. Attainment is well below average because most pupils enter the school with very low attainment. They achieve particularly well in their personal and social development and in physical development. Children develop their knowledge of the world but many find achieving good standards in speaking and listening difficult despite the very good emphasis on this, such as through the philosophy sessions.
5. Pupils also achieve well in the majority of lessons in Years 1 and 2 and in just over half the lessons in Years 3 to 6 because teachers and other adults provide a good level of care and this teaching is effective. However, achievement is currently satisfactory because standards in the work seen in Year 6 are well below average and the teaching observed in Year 6 during the inspection enabled pupils to make satisfactory rather than good progress. Many pupils need continual support and they experience difficulty applying their skills to new and unfamiliar tasks. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language and of the higher attaining pupils is satisfactory.
6. Standards in current work in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well below average by Year 2. Standards of current work are also well below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 but may improve on the return of the experienced teacher to the Year 6 class. Standards in most other subjects where there is sufficient evidence, such as in physical education and ICT, broadly meet the expectation by Years 2 and 6. The good provision in ICT is having a positive impact on learning across subjects because teachers use the facility with increasing confidence. Standards in the work seen in design and technology, from a limited sample of pupils' previous work, are below the expectation because insufficient emphasis is given to completing an attractive finished product and making an evaluation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Behaviour in school is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance is below the national average, although the level is above the average for similar schools, and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Pupils show a keen interest in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils relate well to others and the school has been very successful in creating a racially harmonious environment.
- Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively.
- There has been a relatively high number of exclusions.
- Pupils are aware of what is right and what is wrong; they respect the feelings and cultural traditions of others.
- There is a relatively high level of unauthorised absence.

Commentary

7. The good attitudes to school seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils of all ethnic groups and ages enjoy coming to school; parents confirm this. When lessons are interesting and suitably challenging, pupils listen avidly and respond enthusiastically. For example, in a Year 2 religious education lesson, pupils learning about the story of Noah's Ark listened with rapt attention, eagerly acted out the building of the ark and then discussed sensibly and maturely why they thought God had chosen Noah. As a result of their positive attitudes, they learned very well. Pupils' positive attitudes extend to other aspects of school life such as after school activities. These influence the way pupils respond in assemblies; for example, by showing a willingness to volunteer and to participate in the singing.
8. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults reflect the way they are treated with respect by those who work in the school. Racist incidents are recorded and dealt with appropriately, but they are rare. It is very evident that pupils mix very well regardless of their ethnicity or background. Boys and girls of different ages play well together in the playground, with older pupils showing concern for those younger than themselves. Children in the Foundation Stage are helped to form friendships with older children. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to mix socially. Instances of bullying are uncommon and there was no evidence of any intimidation during the inspection. Matters of concern are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
9. The emphasis on positive discipline ensures that pupils are not belittled, and those who behave well are used as examples to others. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in assemblies and in the dining hall at lunchtime. In most classes, particularly in those of younger children, behaviour is good. In some instances, where the teachers' strategies for behaviour are not as effective, pupils' behaviour is not as good. In consequence, behaviour is now judged to be satisfactory overall, a lowering of standards since the last inspection. A few pupils have very challenging behaviour, and despite the school's best efforts, they have led to an increase in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions since the previous inspection. The number is relatively high for the size and type of school. However, the school has had some success in integrating pupils from other schools who have challenging behaviour.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, and the provision for it is satisfactory now rather than good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. There is no specific planning for a spiritual element in lessons. However, there are instances of pupils being in awe of what happens in class; for example, in the reception class when children had to imagine what it was like after they skipped through a 'magic mirror'. In addition, the use of interactive whiteboards gives some opportunity to enhance lessons. This was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson on polygons when different colourful shapes could be made to appear on screen. However, assemblies do not always give pupils a meaningful period to pray or reflect on wider issues, although topics such as greed are discussed. The philosophy lessons and personal, social and health education and citizenship programme do give pupils good opportunities to discuss wider issues, such as loyalty and friendship.

11. Pupils' moral development is good, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils distinguish right from wrong and have a good level of respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. Adults are very good role models for treating others fairly and with respect. Pupils copy this positive behaviour in the way they listen to and relate to each other. The use of the school's 'good book' and raffle ticket prizes to reward those who are kind and try hard ensures that such qualities are highly prized.
12. Pupils' social development is good, and the provision remains good, as at the time of the last inspection. There is a good sense of community within the school. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate with each other, whether that is through marking each other's work or role-playing together. Through membership of the school council pupils are encouraged to think about the responsibilities of living in a community; for example, when the council representatives discuss how to enhance the playground. The social development of older pupils is enhanced by the residential visit they make. Pupils are also given a sense of the wider needs of society through the fundraising they organise, and participate in, for local and national charities.
13. Pupils' cultural development is good and is provided for well, as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are given good opportunities to celebrate other cultures through music and dance; for example, African drummers and Indian dancers visit the school. 'Black History Month' is celebrated, and other faiths are valued with visits to the gurdwara and to the local church. The school enhances pupils' cultural awareness through participation in a local music festival and in Shakespeare and opera workshops. The wealth of opportunities in Central London is used to good effect; for example, by visits to museums. The impact of all these experiences is that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are confident and relate well to each other, with particularly strong racial harmony that is evident throughout the school.
14. The school has managed to improve the overall attendance figures since the previous inspection and authorised absence is now considerably less than it was. The level of attendance is below the national average, although it is above the average for similar schools. The number of unauthorised absences is still high compared with other schools, despite the concerted efforts of staff to reduce it. Methods include telephoning parents on the first day of absence, sending out letters, enlisting the support of the educational welfare officer and rewarding good attendance with certificates. There are still some parents, however, who do not give reasons for their children's absence and this has a negative impact on the school's statistics as well as their children's education. The unauthorised absence figure has also been adversely affected because pupils have moved from the area without the school being informed, so that the pupils remain on roll. Punctuality has been a focus of attention with some beneficial effects. However, a small number of pupils is still consistently late which has detrimental consequences as they miss the start of the school day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2%	School data	1.2%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.4%

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	98	5	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – any other background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	49	5	1
Black or Black British – any other background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school has an appropriate curriculum and enriches this well with a wide range of opportunities beyond lessons. The provision for pupils' care and guidance is good. Links with parents and the community are good, and with other schools and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6 it is satisfactory overall and good in Years 1 to 3. The school places a high priority on pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly in the philosophy sessions, which has a good impact on their learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision in the Foundation Stage leads to good learning and achievement.
- Teachers usually create the necessary conditions for learning well and set clear expectations for behaviour.
- The teaching assistants have a very significant impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' poor language skills are a barrier to learning.
- Teachers are growing in confidence in the use of the interactive whiteboards, which promote good interest and achievement.
- Some teaching is not sharp enough and monitoring is not fully effective.

- The use of targets to promote learning and of assessment in lesson planning are underdeveloped; the quality of some marking is poor.

Commentary

15. Teaching and learning in the foundation stage and in Years 1 to 2 are good. However, in Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are satisfactory. Here, elements of teaching are unsatisfactory, such as the expectation and challenge for pupils in Year 6 in science last year, and this affects their learning. Poor marking, which has continued this year, does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve. The impact of these weaknesses is such that the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. In addition, it was not possible to observe the teaching of the usual Year 6 teacher since she was on long-term sick leave. In the reception class planning is structured well to provide a good range of experiences so that the children achieve well. The class teacher has established very good relationships which encourage the children to try hard and to learn. The nursery nurse makes a valuable contribution to children's learning. The teacher's approach promotes excellent opportunities for all children, within a framework of excellent expectations for behaviour. As a result children are highly motivated to take part in activities, and delight in their own efforts. For example, children formed the letter 'p' on the interactive whiteboard and watched fascinated as the computer program redrew their letter shape. The teacher's lively and engaging approach, which promotes much worthwhile talk amongst the children, is based on very good subject knowledge and understanding of young children. This approach, and the well-managed curriculum, ensures that the children make good gains in early skills and understanding. There are good assessment procedures, built upon perceptive observation, to track children's progress. Assessment is used effectively in planning.
16. Taken together, the overall quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning is comprehensive and in Years 1 and 2 usually provides a good basis and structure for the lesson. The well-established approach to the teaching of philosophy through the school is helping to improve pupils' speaking, listening and reasoning skills; for example, this was noted during discussion about the Wizard of Oz in Year 6. It also supports pupils' personal development by encouraging them to listen to others. Teachers generally insist on good standards of behaviour and have good classroom management, which promote a good working atmosphere. In English, the teaching of handwriting, presentation and spelling is inconsistent from Year 2 into Years 3 to 6 and the quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work varies from poor to very good. Insufficient focus is given to extending writing skills through other subjects because opportunities for pupils to write are not provided by the variety of topics set.
17. In mathematics, teachers give good attention to pupils' numeracy skills. Most sessions are effective but not always timed well to give sufficient opportunity to complete individual or group work. Teachers demonstrate confidence and good use of the interactive whiteboard to promote learning. Their skilled questioning, especially in Years 1 to 4, encourages pupils to reason and explain. As a result, pupils achieve well and gain skills more confidently. In science, pupils' well below average standards in the 2004 national test were the result of some unsatisfactory elements of teaching and a lack of monitoring for improvement. For example, the marking of pupils' work in Year 6 was poor, and did not set out how to improve. Some science topics were not covered in sufficient depth and investigational skills had insufficient attention. Teaching of science in Years 1 to 4 is better; pupils' work demonstrates that expectations are high and work, including investigative tasks, is thorough. Teaching was observed in lessons in Years 3 and 4 only because of the arrangement to focus on specific subjects week by week. The quality of teaching in these lessons was good, based upon good subject knowledge. For example, in Year 4, the teacher developed pupils' scientific enquiry skills by prompting them to plan and carry out their own investigation of human bone structure and movement of muscles.

18. Many pupils are not sufficiently independent in their learning and continue to need adult support in order to make progress, which tends to limit their achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well in lessons and achieve well because tasks are planned specifically for them. Teachers usually adapt tasks carefully for pupils' differing levels of attainment to provide good access and reinforcement of skills. On many occasions teachers arrange for the level of support to vary according to pupils' learning needs.
19. Most teachers observe pupils well and recognise through ongoing assessment where pupils have difficulties, although recorded assessment is less developed. Some teachers, notably in Years 1 to 3, make thoughtful interventions to resolve misunderstandings. In general, teachers' good relationships encourage pupils to make a good effort in most lessons. Teachers put considerable effort into increasing pupils' self-esteem, which is effective in encouraging them to show what they know and can do. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies considerably. Some provides confirmation of understanding and points out errors carefully. However, in some books the quality of marking is unacceptable, notably in the previous Year 6 class and the present Year 5, since children's books do not have any marking by the teacher for several months at a time. These lapses indicate a lack of rigorous monitoring by senior members of staff. The practice of setting pupils clear short-term targets is not established.
20. The deployment of teaching assistants is generally very good. Teaching assistants offer suggestions and lead pupils to make choices by asking appropriate questions. They explain the meaning of words and assist pupils in their written work. They support pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they know what to do to make progress and achieve well. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress in lessons because they are supported well. Children learning English as an additional language are also supported well.
21. The quality of some teaching and learning in foundation subjects is good; for example, in singing and physical education. Activities are well planned and often taught reflecting the teachers' own enthusiasm so that pupils achieve well. Classes are managed well; for example, by providing tasks matched closely to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Relationships are warm and encouraging; this helps to motivate pupils to learn. Teachers are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do even though there is no formal record of pupils' progress in several subjects. In some lessons, such as physical education, pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate other pupils' work and to reflect on the results of their own work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.9%)	9 (26.5 %)	13 (38.2 %)	10 (29.4 %)	1(2.9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

The Curriculum

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide range of activities.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is good.

- There is good support for pupils who have special education needs.
- The use of time allocated to subjects is not well balanced.
- The deployment of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not planned effectively.

Commentary

22. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is extended for all pupils by the inclusion of lessons in philosophy and personal, social and health education and citizenship. These lessons, which promote good discussion, make a positive contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Religious education is based on the agreed syllabus of the local authority. Pupils are taught appropriately in Year 6 about sex and relationships and the possible hazards surrounding drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
23. Planning for literacy and numeracy is based satisfactorily on the national frameworks for these subjects. National guidance in other subjects is adapted suitably to plan the content of what is taught. The development of subjects over time is a weakness. Time spent in English is 'top heavy' and includes a literacy hour extended by a combination of other English activities during the course of a morning or afternoon. The use of other subjects to practise and develop literacy skills is not planned effectively. Consequently some time is spent on English which would be better devoted to other subjects. The arrangement to focus on specific subjects week by week, except mathematics, English and physical education, hinders the systematic development of skills. This is particularly noticeable in science, where pupils' enquiry skills are underdeveloped leading to a decline in standards. Provision for ICT and physical education is stronger. Here there is a more rigorous approach by teachers and, for ICT, good support from the subject co-ordinator, which results in more effective monitoring and better standards and achievement.
24. Pupils' personal development is well provided for through personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons. Younger pupils learn about growth and healthy lifestyles. The school nurse helps to inform pupils in Years 5 and 6 about the changes which take place at puberty and the need for personal hygiene. There are good opportunities during time for discussion for pupils to explore issues surrounding relationships with others, and their roles and responsibilities within the community. These discussions are enhanced by activities which involve children in community events such as art projects.
25. The school recognises the cultural backgrounds and particular needs of pupils well. The strong emphasis on speaking and listening benefits those whose first language is not English. Racial harmony is promoted well through projects with local artists and through the celebration of other cultures in school assemblies. A good example of this was a performance of African singing and dancing by a group of pupils from different minority ethnic groups. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well in lessons. Teaching assistants are very sensitive to pupils' particular needs when working with small groups and are skilled at helping pupils focus on tasks so that they achieve their learning objectives.
26. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Children enjoy learning because of the challenging activities. Good use is made of the school hall for their physical development. There could be better access to the area outside the classroom and a wider range of resources so that a continuous free flow of activities linked to other areas of learning could be planned. Nevertheless, accommodation and the level and quality of staffing have much improved, and the reception class is now an integral part of the school. The school has very good procedures to support the transfer of pupils from one class teacher to the next.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Effective organisation ensures that pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants. The

school's co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that pupils' needs are regularly reviewed and parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress.

28. Arrangements for pupils to transfer to secondary school are very good. The school's link with Greenwich College's Initial Teacher Training scheme has contributed well to staff recruitment and to some extent, to retention of staff in school. Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants who have a significant impact on pupils' learning and standards of behaviour. Resources overall are good. ICT resources are used particularly well by teachers to promote learning.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All members of staff have had recent training in child protection procedures and first aid.
- The school's child protection policy needs to be updated.
- A good variety of support is available to pupils and they have a very great deal of trust in adults.
- Pupils feel fully involved in the school.

Commentary

29. The school continues to give a high priority to pupils' care and welfare. For example, whole-school staff training took place very recently to give guidance in child protection matters. The headteacher, who is the designated co-ordinator, meets with midday supervisors regularly, and includes child protection matters on the agenda. The school's policy for child protection is based on local area guidelines but needs to be updated to include the latest guidance.
30. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy. Governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and caretaker, carry out regular risk assessments appropriately. Fire drills take place at appropriate intervals and all the necessary checks to electrical and fire equipment are carried out. Two members of staff have had more in-depth first aid training and all members of staff have undergone some training. Pupils who are ill or injured are therefore looked after well, and detailed records are kept of any accidents or illnesses that occur. The breakfast club provides children with a good start to the day.
31. The relatively small size of the school ensures that support for different groups of pupils is good since they are very well known by all staff. There are no formal methods to monitor personal development. Instead it is done informally through shared issues or concerns. The learning mentors, who are skilled in helping children's personal development, play an important role in supporting pupils who perhaps lack social skills, or need help with homework or who are new to the school. The school also now benefits from weekly sessions with a counsellor who works with a small number of targeted pupils. Pupils who have behaviour difficulties are supported through the school's close links with the local education authority's Pupil Referral Unit. Different strategies are employed to reduce barriers to learning. It is evident that pupils feel comfortable and safe in school and that they find adults very approachable. As a result, they are sure that any concerns can be resolved. In addition, parents are confident that the school is encouraging their children to become mature and independent.
32. Pupils are given a voice in the school; for example, through being involved in drawing up class rules, and through the school council. The selection process ensures that representatives for the school council are aware of their responsibilities. Pupils are given the chance to canvass

their peers on school issues; for example, on enhancing the playground equipment. Pupils' suggestions of charities for which the school could raise funds are also listened to, and pupils are then given the responsibility to organise events.

33. There is a high number of pupils who join the school throughout the year. There are good arrangements to ensure they settle quickly and happily. They and their parents are shown around the school by the headteacher. When children start school they are supported well by learning mentors and paired up with a 'buddy' from their class. As a result they soon feel part of the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. There are good links with the community. Very good links are in place with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of events involving their children but curriculum meetings are less well attended.
- The members of staff are very accessible to parents.
- Well-developed community links are beneficial to the school.
- A wide variety of very strong links is in place with a range of other schools.

Commentary

34. The good links with parents seen at the last inspection have been maintained despite the high turnover of pupils since some families only stay in the area for a short while. This has been done through the school encouraging parents to play a part in their children's education; for example, by hearing their children read at home. Members of staff, including the headteacher, make themselves accessible to parents each day. As a result, the small number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or who returned the parents' questionnaire had a positive view of the school.
35. Parents are particularly happy with the standard of teaching in the school, the progress their children make and the way members of staff expect pupils to work hard. The contribution that parents make to their children's education at home and at school is satisfactory overall. Many parents help their children to do homework, and some help in school or with clubs. The Friends' Association, run by a small core group of parents, has provided funds to enhance the school; for example, it has provided a new sound system. However, there is a significant minority of parents who do not ensure that their children attend regularly, or punctually, and this has an impact on their children's education. In addition, although parents attend consultation meetings in good numbers, the school has a disappointing response to curriculum meetings; for example, one held recently to explain developments in the use of ICT in the school, was only attended by a few parents.
36. Parents are canvassed regularly for their views about the school. Any suggestions are responded to positively. For example, when parents felt the books in school needed to be updated, each class was given a substantial budget to replenish the stock. Parents receive newsletters and information about what their children will be learning. The progress reports they receive each year for their children are satisfactory with some good information for English, mathematics and science. However, the comments for other subjects are very brief and do not always give parents a clear picture of progress in these areas. The school's prospectus includes all the necessary information, but the governors' annual report needs to include a statement relating to the action taken following the last inspection; it also needs to include information about the school's accessibility plan for pupils with disabilities.
37. The school makes good use of opportunities in the local community; for example, pupils benefit from the coaching given by representatives from major London football clubs. In addition, the area is used well to enhance pupils' learning; for example, through visits to the local Sikh temple and to the church. Awareness of the local community is widened by pupils' representation on a local environmental youth forum. The school also makes good use of the wealth of opportunities easily accessible in London, such as to museums and art galleries. All these activities have a positive impact not only on pupils' education, but also on their personal development.
38. Effective organisation ensures that pupils with special educational needs receive good support from extra support staff and teaching assistants. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils' needs are regularly reviewed, and that parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress.
39. The links with other schools, established while the school was a Beacon school, have been maintained through the local 'excellence cluster'. This has benefited pupils in several ways;

for example, by sharing resources and transition projects with the local secondary school to which many of Northwood's pupils transfer. The learning mentors and ICT co-ordinator are involved in summer school projects for pupils moving on to secondary school, which eases the transition to the next stage of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership by the headteacher and governors is good. Leadership by other key staff is satisfactory; and management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has provided good leadership for school developments over many years but aspects of monitoring lack rigour.
- There is a good ethos of mutual support and teamwork amongst all staff.
- Governors give good support to the school and understand their responsibilities well.
- The role of subject co-ordinators requires improvement.

Commentary

40. The headteacher recognises that pupils will not learn effectively unless they feel happy and secure. In this area both she and the deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. The staff sets a high priority on forming good relationships throughout the school community and includes pupils from all different groups well. They know all the pupils and their parents, and are aware of individuals' needs. They lead by example. The deputy headteacher sets a good example for the rest of the staff through her own teaching. The school is supportive of its staff and their personal professional development. However, there is a need to link this more closely to whole-school development.
41. The headteacher and governors have a good working relationship. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and support it through regular visits. They are knowledgeable about standards of attainment but need to develop more rigorous monitoring strategies so that they can challenge the school more critically in order to raise standards. They have recognised the necessity to retain and recruit a strong workforce, and this has been reflected in their financial planning. Despite the commitment to developing staff, the recruitment and retention of teachers remain significant issues. This is due to local factors and the position of the school near to the Inner London boundary where a higher London allowance is paid. To help overcome this, the school has been successful in encouraging teaching assistants to train as teachers.
42. The school has retained the headteacher and deputy headteacher but the third member of the senior management team is new to the role as well as those with subject responsibilities. Members of staff work well together as a team and there is an ethos of mutual support. However, there are inadequate whole-school procedures to support subject co-ordinators in their roles and consequently there is insufficient focus on raising standards, including by the headteacher and senior management team. Subject co-ordinators have had several opportunities to fulfil their role, such as observing lessons and leading in-service training. However, these procedures are not yet part of a regular programme which has specific targets for development.
43. The special educational needs support staff is managed well by the deputy headteacher who ensures that good communication exists between all those responsible, both within the school and during outside activities and play. This ensures that these pupils have good support and achieve well.

44. Performance management targets have focused usefully on whole-school issues such as time management and the development of ICT. These specific issues have contributed to improvement across the school.
45. Members of the governing body provide the school with good strategic direction that is informed well through formal visits and informal contacts. These visits help to inform targets for forward planning, which are then set out clearly in the school's development plan. Targets are costed appropriately and governors ensure the principles of best value are applied in their financial decisions. Financial management is good and works to the benefit of the pupils. It is focused on raising standards, although it has been less effective in practice because monitoring is not sufficiently established. The school's budget share is low but additional funding related to the status as a Beacon school and to the Excellence in Cities initiative has enabled the school to fund several worthwhile improvements, such as the appointment of the learning mentors. The sum carried forward from the 2003 budget was a little higher than usual. Funds were retained to ensure that staffing levels could be maintained. There was also an unexpected increase in funding because children joined Northwood recently from a neighbouring school. The governors and headteacher work together effectively to monitor the impact of their financial decisions. For example, they check that the interactive whiteboards are promoting pupils' learning. The office runs very smoothly and daily routines are carried out efficiently.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	544 091	Balance from previous year	16 717
Total expenditure	517 533	Balance carried forward to the next	43 275
Expenditure per pupil	2 640		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

There have been significant improvements for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. New accommodation means that the reception class is now an integral part of the school. The employment of a full time qualified nursery nurse has added strength to the overall teaching provision. Children get off to a good start because the overall quality of teaching in the areas of learning is good. Children's overall attainment is generally very low when they start school. A significant number of children speaks very little English. They cannot express mathematical ideas, or ideas about the world around them. Few have any pre-school experience. Nevertheless they make good progress because of the teaching they receive and achieve well, although overall standards are still well below expectations for their age when they leave the reception class. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language and of the higher attaining pupils is good. Assessments undertaken by the teacher and nursery nurse are thorough and provide a clear profile of children's progress. Planning embraces all areas of learning and provides good guidance for the development of language and mathematical skills but is less clear about how learning is linked purposefully across the different areas.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers maintain very high expectations so children respond very well.
- The teacher and nursery nurse work very well as a team. This has a strong impact on children's development.

Commentary

46. Children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. Teachers maintain very high expectations so children respond very well to challenges; for example, they tidy up while 'busy' music is played. They are happy to come into school and quickly become familiar with daily routines; for example, they self-register when they indicate whether they require a dinner or a packed lunch. Teachers constantly reinforce rules of safety, and encourage children to take responsibility for simple tasks such as fetching the resources for an activity or taking the register to the office. Adults provide excellent role models and the consistency in the way they respond to children means that those in their care form trusting and secure relationships. Children's standards are well below the expectation for this area of learning. Children work harmoniously in small groups and show great respect for one another. There is some thoughtful discussion during 'philosophy' sessions which helps children come to terms with their feelings and relationships. Teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good. This benefits particularly those for whom English is an additional language.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection.
- Speaking skills are developed very well through a wide range of activities.

Commentary

47. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy. Speaking and listening skills are very strongly reinforced by teachers who take every opportunity to engage children in talk. As a result children quickly gain the confidence to express their ideas and opinions and they know how to listen. Speaking skills are developed very well through a wide range of activities. For example, children discuss the pictures when sharing books and are encouraged to use the correct language when talking about mathematical problems. Some very exciting language development took place in a lesson where the teacher's outstanding skills helped inspire children's imagination. The teacher provided a special 'magic mirror' made so that the children could actually walk through it to the other side where they had to describe what they could see. This led to some excellent imaginative dialogue between children as they shared their discoveries and added a wonderful dimension to the story by Anthony Browne from which they were reading. Children enjoy books. They are beginning to sustain their interest in a story and comment on things which happen. They know some features of books; for example, what the author and illustrator do. They begin to understand that pictures carry meaning.
48. There is a good emphasis on learning letter sounds, and children practise sounds and shapes of letters confidently using the computer and the interactive whiteboard. Adults work very closely as a team and share story telling sessions. In one lesson, children were very well motivated by the way the nursery nurse engaged them in a story. Children took great delight in using hand gestures to mimic the movements of characters and adding their own imaginative dialogue. The quality of teaching is very good in this area. Children's standards are currently very low and are likely to be well below the expectation for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good. Children's speaking skills develop quickly so they gain the confidence to share their ideas and learn from one another. This benefits particularly those for whom English is an additional language.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their mathematical development.
- There are good independent activities to help the children consolidate writing and matching skills.

Commentary

49. Children make good progress in mathematical development. Learning is carefully planned to build up knowledge and understanding of number, measure and shape systematically from a very low baseline. There is a strong emphasis on developing mathematical language to help children understand and express their ideas. Language is reinforced well through practical activities. In one session the mathematical significance of 'more' and 'less' was learned well because children were able to remove bottles from the wall they had built as they sang 'ten green bottles'. At each stage the teacher questioned children to confirm their understanding. For example, in the role-play area children match cups, saucers and plates to the place settings and share out pieces of 'food'. Children would benefit from more examples of concepts such as 'in between numbers', before moving on to practical work, to ensure their

understanding of language is secure. The quality of teaching is good in this area. Children's standards are currently very low and are on course to be well below the expectation for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, promoted by good questioning.
- Access to the outside area is difficult and inhibits a 'free-flow' of activities/

Commentary

50. Children achieve well in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. They go for walks near the school to find out about features of the environment. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop technical skills. Children assemble construction kits, build with blocks and are very confident when using ICT; for example, while some children wrote letters on the interactive whiteboard, another managed the computer very skilfully to identify letters and to listen to the sounds they make. Children are supported well by the adults in the classroom. Activities are punctuated by teacher's questions to encourage children's thinking and their language development. As a result, the quality of teaching is good. Children's standards are well below the expectation for this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's physical development is good.
- The teacher and nursery nurse work very well as a team.

Commentary

51. Children are well co-ordinated and move freely showing good awareness of others working in the space around them. They climb and jump confidently when playing on large apparatus. Physical education lessons in the hall are very well taught so children achieve well. Lessons are full of activity and children are able to contribute their own ideas, such as which part of their bodies to 'bounce on'. The teacher and nursery nurse are fully involved in the activities. This encourages children to try as hard as they can. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop finer control skills by using tools safely when shaping and moulding dough. They manipulate small construction pieces, pencils and brushes skilfully. There is no direct access to the outside play area and resources for outside play are limited. This makes it difficult for children to move freely between activities which link the areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good. Children's standards are below the expectation for this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative play is developed well.
- The good teamwork between the teacher and nursery nurse has a strong impact on children's learning and development.

Commentary

52. In their creative development children learn the names of colours and confidently mix paints to find the shade they want. The painting area is a permanent feature of the classroom and the children's self-portraits and collages, related to stories they have read, are testimony to their growing confidence and skill. Imaginative play is developed well in the role-play area where children can dress up and re-enact stories and 'real-life' situations. Children learn a good repertoire of songs during weekly singing lessons, and have opportunities to experiment with percussion instruments. The quality of teaching is good. Children's standards are on course to be below the expectation for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills.
- The management of the subject requires improvement to ensure consistency from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Standards in the subject are not high enough.
- Standards in handwriting require improvement in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

53. Achievement is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language and of the higher attaining pupils is satisfactory. Current standards in English are well below average. The trend in standards in the national tests was above the national trend for the four years up to 2003 but standards are lower in 2004. A significant proportion of pupils enters Year 1 with low levels of skills in communication, language and literacy. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some very good teaching observed in Years 1 to 3. Teachers' planning and pupils' work indicate that teachers' expectations of pupils are high in these classes. However, the very low attainment on entry means that while pupils achieve satisfactorily in comparison with their starting points, many still fall well below the expectations for their ages in National Curriculum tests. Test results are also affected by relatively high rates of mobility amongst pupils.
54. The introduction of the teaching of philosophy across the school has enabled pupils to further their speaking, listening and reasoning skills. Teachers give appropriate opportunities in literacy lessons to further these important skills. There is good evidence to suggest that this is working well and helping to improve pupils' language and reasoning skills, although many find writing difficult. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 where pupils spent time discussing elements of the Wizard of Oz story. Pupils were confident in giving their opinions and many of the higher attaining pupils were able to construct arguments for and against specific viewpoints.
55. Standards in reading have been well below average in Year 2 over the past few years. However, evidence suggests that standards are likely to be higher by the end of the academic year. The majority of pupils knows how to sound out unfamiliar words and read simple texts accurately. Higher attaining pupils are reading with increased fluency. They talk confidently about the characters and the plot, and can suggest possible endings for the story. Less able pupils use picture cues to identify words but require more support. Well-planned writing tasks in Year 2 enable pupils to sequence stories based on a familiar framework. Pupils of all

abilities are confident about attempting writing and there is good support for the teaching of sound and spelling patterns.

56. Resources for the teaching and enjoyment of reading have improved since the last inspection. All classes have sufficient good quality books, including different genres from which to choose. However, the absence of a library area in the school restricts the teaching of library and research skills.
57. Standards of writing are lower than those in reading in Years 3 to 6 because pupils' lack of vocabulary and knowledge of standard forms of English restrict them. There is insufficient continuity from Year 2 in handwriting, presentation and the teaching of spelling. The good practice in these areas in Years 1 and 2 is not sustained through Years 3 to 6. Marking and assessment of work are erratic and does not always follow the established school policies. The school has recognised the need to promote language and literacy in order for pupils to extend their skills. However, the extra time is not always used productively and in Years 3 to 6 the literacy sessions are too long. Insufficient focus is given to extending writing skills through other subjects. While pupils write for different purposes, they do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing through the interesting topics studied in subjects such as history and religious education.
58. The use of teaching assistants is generally very good. Teaching assistants offer suggestions and lead pupils to make choices by asking appropriate questions. They explain the meaning of words and assist pupils in their written work. Often they support pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they know what to do to make progress and achieve well.
59. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her subject and has led some in-service training. However, she has not been given sufficient time or direction to manage the subject effectively across the school. There is no systematic programme to ensure continuity or consistency of approach across Years 1 to 6. Progress is significantly impeded because there is no regular monitoring, no appraisal of work nor a unified approach to the teaching of parts of the literacy curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Throughout the school speaking and listening skills are promoted very well. Teachers use open ended questions in most lessons to promote language development. Currently, few structured links are made between subjects in order to develop literacy skills; for example, in history or science. In many classes ICT is used to develop and reinforce pupils' literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of current work are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 to 3. Teachers give a good emphasis to numeracy skills but there is little problem solving.
- Pupils usually take a good interest in activities and work hard.
- The good use of the interactive whiteboards promotes good learning.
- The use of targets is not helping to inform pupils about their work, and, on a few occasions, the targets for pupils with special needs are not addressed directly.

Commentary

61. Pupils' achievement in the work seen is satisfactory from Year 1 to Year 6. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language and of the higher attaining pupils is satisfactory. Current standards are well below average overall by Year 2 and Year 6. This is a lowering of standards reported in Year 2 at the time of the last inspection, although standards in the 1999 national tests were very low. It is also a lowering of standards at Year 6. Pupils' current work in Year 6 and samples of work from the previous year show that while many pupils reach the expected standards and a few exceed them, the proportion is well below average. The results of the 2004 national tests at Year 6 show that standards were below the national average and below the average for similar schools, indicating a lowering of standards since 2003. The school is currently affected by long-term staff absence in Year 6; evidence of this teacher's previous work in Year 4 suggests that standards are likely to improve upon her return.
62. Children enter reception with a very low level of skills and understanding of mathematical ideas. They achieve well in reception because teaching is good. It is focused well to build up the children's skills and understanding of number, shape and other ideas, using a strong emphasis on developing their mathematical language. This good approach is effective in helping children to understand and express their ideas and continues into Years 1 and 2. For example, in Year 1, the teacher's good emphasis on how to describe various shapes combined with her very good use of the interactive whiteboard led to most children naming and discussing simple shapes correctly. Pupils' explanations of the differences between shapes were limited due to their weak language skills. The higher attaining pupils have a better knowledge; for example, they recognised a pentagon and a hexagon. By Year 2 pupils' numeracy skills have improved but are well below average. Most pupils are able to add ten and subtract ten correctly, but few pupils are confident with number relationships. Their grasp of the properties of three-dimensional shapes is better. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher's good relationships and thoughtful approach encouraged pupils to respond with good attitudes and to describe properties related to numbers of edges and faces. A few higher attaining pupils demonstrated a good understanding; for example, in explaining how to visualise the number of faces on a cylinder. The teaching assistants provide a good level of support for the lower attaining pupils who experience success as a result.
63. In Year 3, the teacher's skilful questioning on number facts to 20 had a good impact on pupils' number skills, but their recall of number facts and mental agility is below the expectation. The teacher provided good visual support through his use of the interactive whiteboard to reinforce the measurement of time so that pupils achieved well. In Year 4 the teacher's good class management and subject knowledge of different shapes ensured that the majority of pupils understood the definition of a polygon. However, time for completing the main task was reduced because too long was spent on an introductory activity. By Year 5, most pupils know how to present data in various graphical forms and can explain the method for making a tally chart. Lively teaching encouraged a good response from the pupils so that they sustained interest well, but several pupils did not have the skills to enter information on to a line graph correctly.
64. In Year 6, attempts to answer questions from previous national tests demonstrated that many pupils take a superficial view of the questions. They do not understand the significance of much of the information given and several pupils do not have the skills to set out calculations correctly; for example, $60 \times £2.25$. Pupils have a basic understanding of probability related to everyday events such as football matches, but are less confident in applying their knowledge to unfamiliar tasks. They showed this in the variety of answers they gave when calculating probabilities of different numbers coming up on spinning wheels marked with numbers. Pupils' current work, and that from the previous Year 6, across the mathematical topics show that standards are well below average.
65. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the lessons seen in Years 1 to 3. Teachers give good attention to a mental activity at the start of lessons to improve numeracy

skills, which are an identified weakness. These sessions are generally effective although they are too long on some occasions, limiting the time for the main activity. Teachers demonstrate good use of the interactive whiteboard to introduce ideas and encourage discussion, and they usually have a suitable selection of resources available. Teachers' skilled questioning, especially with the younger pupils, encourages pupils to reason and explain. As a result, they achieve well and gain skills more confidently. Most teachers are observant of the pupils and pick up through their ongoing assessments what pupils find difficult. The good relationships encourage pupils to make a good effort in most lessons. The quality of marking varies considerably. Some provides confirmation of understanding and points out errors carefully. However, in some books the quality of marking is unacceptable, notably in the previous Year 6 class and the present Year 5 class. Books show there had been no marking by the teacher for several months at a time. These lapses indicate a lack of monitoring by senior members of staff. The practice of setting pupils clear short-term targets is also not established throughout the school.

66. Assessment procedures through the school for mathematics are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator provides a good analysis of test results to help inform future teaching. Since she was absent during the inspection, it was not possible to hold a discussion with her, but evidence indicates that the curriculum is fully in place. Subject management is broadly satisfactory. Some monitoring procedures are satisfactory, although more thorough checks on planning, marking and assessments are required in order to raise expectations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The use and promotion of pupils' number and other skills in other subjects is generally dependent on the approach of individual teachers. This is because the school does not have an agreed plan to apply and reinforce mathematical skills in other subjects. However, there are some worthwhile examples. In science, pupils set out data in tables and use graphs to represent relationships; in physical education, teachers encourage pupils to be aware of the space around them and to anticipate the movements of a ball from a partner; in geography and history teachers expect pupils to apply a variety of skills such as in the use of scale or a time line; in ICT younger children make designs using shapes while older pupils analyse data using a spreadsheet.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have fallen since the last inspection.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of work and teaching have not been rigorous enough.
- Teaching seen during the inspection was good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy learning.
- There are good resources which are well organised.

Commentary

68. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since the previous report. Standards in the 2004 national tests were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. This is a lowering of standards since 2003. Current work shows that standards have declined and are now well below expectations. Although there was a significant proportion of pupils who had additional learning needs within the 2004 Year 6 cohort, their lower achievement was exacerbated by some unsatisfactory elements of teaching and a lack of monitoring for

improvement. In the samples of work seen the marking of pupils' work was poor and provided no indication of how well pupils achieved or what they should do next. Presentation for the most part was also poor with a distinct improvement seen in some girls' presentation. Some science topics are not covered in sufficient depth and there is too little evidence of pupils' planning, conducting and recording clearly their own investigations. Overall pupils' targets are not clear enough, so too little is expected of them. Achievement was better in Years 3 and 4. Here, from the evidence of a sample of pupils' work, expectations are high and work, including investigative tasks, is thorough and well organised. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' work in topic books is well presented, and marking is used well to assess pupils' achievements. Very few pupils, however, are able to record work independently and standards are well below the national expectation.

69. Standards at the end of Year 2, based on teachers' assessments have remained consistently well below average over time. However, given their very low baseline when they start school, they achieve satisfactorily overall.
70. Because time for science is not organised on a weekly basis, teaching during the inspection was seen in Years 3 and 4 only. The quality of teaching in those lessons was good. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and lessons are planned well. Teachers make good use of resources, especially ICT. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to display information. Computers were used well in Year 3 to help pupils find out more about 'healthy teeth'. The model skeleton and box of 'assorted bones' were good sources of interest in the lesson in Year 4. The newly appointed Year 4 teacher also correctly recognised the need to develop pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, and involved them in planning their own investigation of the human bone structure and movement of muscles. Pupils show good enthusiasm for science and contribute well to discussion. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well in lessons and achieve well because of the tasks planned for them.
71. Leadership of science is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has held the post only since the beginning of the current term. Although her understanding of what is required is clear it is too soon to judge the impact of any revised action. Previously the standards have not been monitored closely or matched against expected curriculum outcomes. Long gaps in the time between science topics appear to have inhibited the systematic development of enquiry skills. The school has already taken positive steps to put things right by ensuring that best practice is shared more widely.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

72. No lessons in ICT were timetabled for the days of the inspection so judgements derive from examples of pupils' previous work and the use of ICT in other lessons. In general teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard to promote discussion and achievement, although some are at an early stage in gaining confidence. Children in reception have a very good introduction to ICT, which promotes active learning. They know how to use many of the icons; for example, they can get the computer to redraw their shapes of letters, and have the skills to step through a program. Standards as pupils enter Year 1 are below average. Pupils in Year 1 are developing skills to control the mouse; for example, by dragging shapes into position to build a picture. They know how to change shape and colour. By Year 2, pupils have early word processing skills and they are beginning to set out their work using capitals and simple punctuation. During Years 3 to 6 pupils use sensors to collect data, which they present in graphical form. They enter data into a spreadsheet and use formulae to find totals. By Year 6, previous work shows that pupils have the skills to produce a computerised presentation. All pupils benefit from the school's good management system which allocates a folder to each of them and allows them to organise and save their work. The evidence from related work in other lessons, and from examples of pupils' previous work, indicates that standards in ICT meet the expectation by Years 2 and 6. This maintains the position at the time of the previous inspection, although the school has clearly made good headway in improving provision. A few higher attaining pupils' exceed the expectation. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of good achievement.

73. The subject co-ordinator provides good, thorough subject leadership and brings a high level of personal enthusiasm to the role. His file demonstrates considerable work over time to support colleagues and ensure full subject coverage. For example, ICT links across the curriculum are very thorough, with opportunities and programs for each year group to use in other subjects, including science, history and design and technology. Assessment procedures are clear and teachers assess pupils against key objectives, although no completed assessment forms were available at this early stage of the term. The quality of computer hardware is very good. There is a computer suite and there are further mobile laptops to give flexibility of use. All classes have interactive whiteboards. The subject co-ordinator has good monitoring procedures; he monitors lessons regularly and gives helpful feedback to staff. The subject action plan and 2002-2004 development plan for the subject provide a good structure for improvements and indicate good leadership over time.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. There are suggested planned activities to link ICT with all subjects. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard effectively in many lessons, adding a good visual dimension to pupils' learning. Pupils find the interactive whiteboard motivating and they demonstrate good attitudes towards the activities. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 4 the teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard to illustrate various shapes. In Year 3, the teacher generated good interest in science by using ICT to access information about teeth. In Year 5, the teacher showed pupils how Roman soldiers lived using a very good video. In Year 2, the class teacher used the interactive whiteboard effectively to reinforce the vocabulary and ideas relating to Noah's Ark.

HUMANITIES

75. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus, and planning for the subject meets statutory requirements. **Religious education** was sampled during the inspection. Due to the organisation of the timetable into weekly subject blocks, only Year 2 religious education lessons were observed. Evidence was also drawn from work scrutiny, but this was only available from some classes. Where teaching was observed pupils were enthusiastic and knowledgeable and the teacher used effective questioning to encourage them to think about the reasons why God chose Noah. The teacher made good use of role-play and this enhanced opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The school has established links with the local church, and the vicar makes regular visits to the school. Other faiths are supported through visits; for example, the school has made links with the local Sikh temple. Provision has been enhanced through the use of a well-chosen computer resource, which enables teachers to use up to date video presentations to extend pupils' learning. The subject is managed collectively by the humanities team. This means that while staff are able to share views and discuss changes, there is no one person who takes full responsibility for ensuring that each subject is taught effectively. This is an area for development.
76. Due to the organisation of the timetable into weekly subject blocks only pupils in Year 5 were observed in a history lesson. No lessons were seen in geography. Planning and schemes of work were seen for both **geography** and **history**. Both were satisfactory. A range of work from Years 1 and 2 was scrutinised. Opportunities for more in-depth work do not exist due to the restrictions of the timetable. The subjects are collectively managed by the humanities team so no one has overall responsibility for each subject. This is an area for development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Work in **art and design, design and technology and music** was sampled. Insufficient teaching was seen in those subjects to make a judgement on overall provision. There was limited work on display in art and design. In Year 1 pupils show good aptitude for colour

mixing and manage to create accurate skin tones for self-portraits. In Year 5 some Greek masks provide a colourful display, and observational painting of flowers shows an acceptable level of accuracy and sensitivity in the use of colour. Pupils are inspired to achieve more highly when working with local artists. A banner, which reflects feelings about racial harmony, is a good example of creative design. There is some impressive work from pupils who helped to design murals depicting historical aspects of Northwood. The life-sized murals are now part of a refurbished local railway station.

78. In **design and technology**, teachers' planning follows national subject guidance. Not all classes had completed topics so there was not much evidence to see. Pupils in Year 1 were linking science and design and technology by evaluating the benefits of fresh vegetables as a part of a healthy diet, and designing vegetable salads. In Year 2, vehicles were well-constructed and pupils combined and fixed different materials skilfully. Models included simple mechanisms such as wheels and axles. However they remain in their 'raw' state because pupils have not been encouraged to think about the finished product as part of the design process. Money bags, made by pupils in Year 4, were of a similar design and all were made of the same material, suggesting that too little thought has gone into the design process; for example, pupils had not been allowed to disassemble products in order to evaluate them and generate ideas of their own.
79. Only one session was seen in **music**. Singing was taught well to the combined Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Pupils were taught good listening skills, by repeated musical sequences sung by the teacher, as a warm-up to the lesson. Pupils worked through a good repertoire, singing well to an accompaniment. Singing was tuneful. Pupils recall words from memory and maintained rhythm and melody well. There is provision for instrumental tuition for pupils who play brass and stringed instruments. Pupils discuss music lessons enthusiastically. They know some musical technology and were particularly pleased that they had taken part in a music festival with other schools.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have mostly good attitudes and work hard to improve skills, although a few pupils require firm discipline.
- Teachers make a good choice of activities to improve skills.
- There is a good selection of out-of-school activities.

Commentary

80. Standards are on course to meet the expectation by Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. This maintains the position at the time of the last inspection. The attainment of children in reception is below the expectation although they show developing skill. In some activities they are well co-ordinated and climb and jump confidently; for example, when playing on large apparatus. By Years 1 and 2, pupils demonstrate they have gained satisfactory control and co-ordination in ball skills. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher's very good relationships and demonstrations motivated the pupils to improve their throwing, bouncing and catching. The teacher added a good level of challenge to the higher attaining pupils and maintained a good pace so that pupils were constantly active, and experienced a good variety of tasks. In Year 2, pupils' skills were extended by having to bounce and catch a ball repeatedly. The pupils did not respond well to the teacher's firm approach to managing their behaviour so that their achievement was only satisfactory.

81. In Year 3, good teaching promoted a good improvement in dance because all the pupils were challenged and were keen to develop their styles and work at ideas. In Year 4 the teacher's good relationships with the pupils promoted good attitudes and effort so that pupils improved their ball skills in working with a partner. A few higher attaining pupils demonstrated good, fluent movements and anticipated the position of a ball well. The teaching assistants in all the lessons provided good support.
82. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall, but varied from very good to satisfactory. Teachers plan using published guidance and provide a good lesson structure. They use good strategies to control and motivate the pupils, most of whom have good attitudes but a few demonstrate challenging behaviour. In most lessons the teachers used good methods by demonstrating the skills and setting a good level of challenge. As a result pupils improved their performance.
83. The subject is managed collectively by the teachers so that there is no one person who takes full responsibility for the subject. The teachers consider that the structure and progression of the subject curriculum has improved over the last few years by implementing published material that has a good reputation. The curriculum for physical education is satisfactory and there is expertise on the staff to provide support for colleagues. The school is active in arranging opportunities for pupils to take part in sports clubs and activities beyond school, and provision in this is good. There are satisfactory assessment arrangements and the level of resources is satisfactory. The school would benefit by identifying a lead teacher so that monitoring and development are planned into the school's wider improvement planning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. The school gives a high priority to supporting pupils' personal development, which is expressed through the very good promotion of relationships amongst all children. No separate lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship were observed. However, assemblies and lessons, for example in philosophy, contribute to pupils' personal development. In the reception class, children achieve very well in their personal and social development. The teacher establishes good daily routines so that children learn to listen to others and to contribute in turn. At the end of a morning session the teacher praised the children for their good listening and attention in a way that reflected very good support for their personal and social development. In a philosophy lesson, following a story about black and white elephants, the children talked together in pairs about their ideas, and contributed to a class discussion. This provided good opportunities for children to consider relevant issues and to form relationships with others. In Year 2, pupils listened to a story and reflected on the meaning before posing a thoughtful question. The evidence from other lessons, in English and religious education for example, indicates that the philosophy lessons contribute positively to pupils' ability to reflect on difficult issues and to pose relevant questions. The assemblies provided a focus for reflection; for example, on precious things. However, opportunities for children to contribute ideas were missed.
85. The school provides a good citizenship course through the school as a part of the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. There are relevant topics, such as behaviour towards strangers, local businesses and the needs of senior citizens. The governors have agreed a policy for sex and drugs education. There is a good programme of visitors to support the course; for example, a nurse speaks to children in Years 5 and 6 about personal hygiene and their own development. The school council provides good opportunities for children to take responsibility. Pupils help raise significant sums of money for identified charities. The school council members show visitors around the school and enjoy the responsibility. Personal development is monitored by teachers for their attitudes to work and levels of independence, although there is no formal assessment procedure. The annual reports include careful comment on pupils' personal development. The headteacher provides good leadership for the subject by ensuring that a relevant programme of study is followed.

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	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
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).

