

INSPECTION REPORT

Rotherfield Primary School

Islington, London

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 131740

Headteacher: Ms Elaine Adams

Lead inspector: Anthony Painter

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 October 2004

Inspection number: 267593

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	380
School address:	Rotherfield Street Islington London
Postcode:	N1 3EE
Telephone number:	020 7226 6620
Fax number:	020 7359 1083
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Andrew Bosi

Date of previous inspection: 19/06/2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large urban community primary school. Numbers of pupils have been stable over recent years, with average proportions leaving and joining during the year. Just under half of the pupils are from white backgrounds, whilst the rest have a wide range of cultural origins, with the largest groups from Turkish, African or Caribbean backgrounds. One hundred and three pupils have home languages other than English (mainly Turkish, Arabic and Portuguese), with 23 of these at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils live in the area around the school, which has many elements of severe deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 53.7 per cent, is well above the national average. Children joining the school have very low overall attainment for their age and many have restricted experiences. Currently, 90 pupils (24 per cent and above the national average) have identified special educational needs. Three pupils (0.8 per cent) have a statement of special educational need, which is below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This **good** school provides good value for money. Very strong leadership is creating a very positive ethos and helping to provide good quality education that is improving pupils' achievements.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very strong leadership unites staff in effective teams to steer improvements.
- Teaching varies in quality, although it is good overall and enables pupils to achieve well through the school.
- Very good use of assessment and other data gives a clear focus for continuing development and improving standards.
- The school very successfully supports the personal needs of all pupils and the very good ethos contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Children get a very good start to their schooling in the Foundation Stage classes.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by a very good range of additional learning opportunities.
- Although attendance is good, pupils' punctuality is unsatisfactory.

There has been good progress since the last inspection. In particular, the downward trend of attainment has been halted and there are clear improvements in the quality of education and pupils' progress. Most issues raised in the last report have been successfully remedied, and standards are rising. However, there is further room for improvement in teachers' marking and their use of assessment in order to match work sharply to pupils' abilities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

All pupils achieve **well** from their very low attainment on entering the school. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and learn effectively with the other pupils. Those new to learning English quickly establish themselves and achieve very well.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in personal and social development. However, most are still well below the goals children are expected to reach by the time they start Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress, although their very limited skills restrict their overall attainment. In Years 3 to 6, the fruits of earlier work and rising standards are seen more clearly. Current Year 6 pupils are reaching below average standards in English, mathematics and science, although this is likely to be above that found in

similar schools. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment stand up very well, even when compared nationally. Similarly stronger standards can be seen in younger pupils.

National Curriculum test results in Years 2 and 6 have been mostly well below average in recent years and have not kept up with national trends. Comparisons with similar schools have also been weak. However, many substantial staff changes during this time have caused this decline. Greater stability over the last two years is now having a very positive impact, and tracking information clearly shows how standards are rising.

The school ensures pupils' **good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very high behaviour expectations are leading to improvements in all aspects of pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and they show very good interest in all school activities. Attendance is much improved and is now good, although pupils' punctuality remains unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** education with **good** teaching and learning. Teachers' good relationships and high expectations motivate pupils to learn well. Good explanations and presentations often make very good use of resources to improve learning. Few lessons are unsatisfactory but variations in quality stop pupils from consistently making the best possible progress.

Pupils' wide range of experiences is enriched by very good activities outside lessons. Good information from the school's assessment systems tracks pupils' progress and establishes targets. However, the use of assessment to match tasks to pupils' different abilities could be better. Good links with parents and very good links with the local community support pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Governance is good.

The headteacher's very good leadership ensures a clear, shared view of what needs to be done for the school to improve. She has very successfully steered the school through enormous staffing changes and has established very good teams with clear responsibilities. These are helping the school to succeed and cope better with any future changes.

Very good management places great emphasis on raising standards. Very good self-evaluation identifies developments precisely with links to finances and the professional development of all staff. Financial control is strong.

Governors are supportive of the school and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are increasingly involved in strategic development and monitoring outcomes.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the school's work, particularly teachers' high expectations. Pupils enjoy the strong relationships and the very wide range of activities available to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school.
- Improve pupils' punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils reach **below average standards** by the time they leave the school. However, this is from a very low level on starting school. As a result, their achievement through the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures all pupils achieve well through the school and standards are rising.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make a good start.
- Pupils' standards in ICT are much improved and are now average.

Commentary

1. Although children joining the nursery class have a wide range of backgrounds and attainment, their overall attainment is very low. A number have extremely limited experiences and little English. However, they all settle very quickly into the school routines and make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This results from the rich and well-planned curriculum, well-established routines and very positive relationships. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work together well and plan a wide range of interesting and practical experiences. As a result, children make overall good progress in all areas of learning. However, by the time they begin Year 1, most of the children are still performing at well below the expected standards at this age.
2. In Years 1 and 2, good quality teaching maintains pupils' good achievement, although their very limited skills restrict their overall attainment. Current overall attainment in Year 2 is well below that found nationally. The school's results in recent national tests at the end of Year 2 have reflected these well below average standards. Although the trend of results has been falling, the results from 2003 and 2004 have halted this decline. The 2003 results, for example, were well below average in reading but only below the national average in writing and mathematics. These results compared favourably with the results in similar schools. Initial examination of the 2004 results suggests that the improved position has been maintained. Variations from these levels have been the result of the different abilities of the groups of pupils involved.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (13.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.2 (12.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (14.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, where good teaching can build effectively on the foundation of pupils' earlier learning. The school's recent Year 6 national test results have not kept pace with national improvements. The 2003 results were well below the national average overall and very low in mathematics and science. These results were not so weak when compared with those in similar schools, although the overall level was below average. Results in 2004 were at a similar level, although it is clear from the detailed school records that most pupils made better than expected progress in Year 6. This improved progress is a feature of the present Year 6 pupils and can be seen in the work of younger pupils through the school. A particular strength of pupils' attainment is the relatively high proportions of pupils now reaching the higher than expected Level 5 in all tested subjects, reaching the national average figures. This is further indication of the improving attainment resulting from better achievement. Current Year 6 pupils are attaining at below average levels overall, although this is a considerable improvement in the school's standards and likely to compare favourably with results in similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.7 (23.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.2 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.3 (25.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Throughout the school, pupils reach average standards in ICT. This is a significant improvement on the standards reported in the last report. The school has established new resources and improved methods for teaching the subject which are helping pupils to achieve very well. Effective training has given staff much greater confidence, and this is leading to better teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Strong support from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All such pupils take a full part in all lessons, and staff make good use of close personal knowledge of pupils to help them learn. Class teachers have high aspirations and these pupils develop the confidence to achieve well.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well against their prior attainment. They are given close attention and benefit from the good support provided. The deployment of the specialist teacher together with the good knowledge, skills and the effective leadership of the co-ordinator and senior managers make a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. The pupils' attendance is **good**, but their punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships ensure pupils' attitudes to school and their work are good.
- The behaviour of most pupils in classes and around the school is good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, although some opportunities to promote spiritual and cultural development are missed.

- The school has worked extremely effectively to bring about an impressive increase in attendance but too many pupils arrive late and miss the start of the school day.

Commentary

7. The school has established a very strong atmosphere that is supporting pupils' improving achievement. This is based on establishing higher standards of interactions at all levels and boosting pupils' self-confidence. As a result, the school functions very effectively as a community where staff and pupils show good levels of care. In most lessons and in discussions, pupils show enthusiasm for school and positive attitudes to their work. They listen attentively, maintain concentration and have good working habits. They mix well and enjoy very good and harmonious relationships with adults and classmates throughout the school. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are keen to participate fully in activities. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work. They behave well at all times and focus on their individual tasks. As a result they are proud of their achievements. All adults set good examples to pupils in the way that they treat everyone with respect. Teachers and classroom assistants make their expectations clear, and pupils understand what is expected of them. At playtimes, pupils play well together. In the dining hall, pupils chat happily together and welcome visitors.
8. The school's approach to promoting good behaviour works well. The positive ethos and the values the school upholds are very clear and are a guide for pupils' behaviour. The majority of pupils respond positively to the high expectations that staff have of them. A small and reducing number of pupils still present challenging behaviour but the school has established very good arrangements to support them and reduce the incidents. This has included appropriate exclusion of pupils, although the numbers of such measures have now fallen. Good use is made of rules and rewards for good behaviour that foster a sense of fairness amongst pupils. Rewards are regularly reviewed and changed to keep the pupils motivated. Pupils know and understand the rewards that they can earn in their classes for good work, effort and behaviour. All members of staff respond consistently to any poor behaviour and instances of bullying and this is managed effectively in accordance with school policies. Pupils and parents recognise that this is handled quickly and efficiently and have confidence in the arrangements. Older pupils are given tasks both in class and around the school that develop well their sense of responsibility.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>	<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
White – British	179	3	0
White – any other White background	10	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	22	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0

Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	40	4	0
Black or Black British – African	43	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	72	0	0

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

9. Pupils' spiritual development is soundly promoted, particularly in assemblies, religious education lessons and through special projects and themes, such as when re-enacting the civil rights march by Martin Luther King. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements with enthusiasm and genuine respect. They are regularly given time to reflect on particular themes and many show confidence when expressing feelings and thoughts. However, spiritual development is not systematically considered in teachers' planning and some opportunities to extend pupils' awareness are lost. Some opportunities are used well to develop pupils' cultural awareness, particularly through visits and visitors. Music and art contribute effectively to develop pupils' awareness of different cultures through artists in residence and a range of musical experiences, such as African drumming and jazz. However, there is scope for widening the range of experiences on offer and to draw more widely on the community as a resource.

10. Since the last inspection, pupils' attendance has risen dramatically. The school was determined to overcome the problems of high levels of absence and set about sending a clear message to parents that regular attendance was essential for their children's good education. A combination of consistent routines, very careful monitoring and positive rewards for good attendance is proving successful. Pupils who find school life difficult and families who have problems getting their children to school are given very good support by the Inclusion team and learning mentors. A particular success this term is the achievement of full attendance by a pupil who previously missed over half her schooling. However, the rate of unauthorised absence is still higher than most primary schools, with a significant number of parents keeping their children off school for inappropriate or slight reasons. The good attendance of the vast majority of pupils contributes well to their learning and progress.

11. Many families do not bring their children to school punctually in the morning. Often, some pupils slip into their classroom after registration or arrive late for assembly. These pupils feel uncomfortable about turning up late and invariably miss valuable learning time. Lateness is well monitored in the Years 3 to 6 registers, but the tracking of lateness in the younger classes is not effective enough. The breakfast club is making a good start in encouraging good time keeping. The punctuality of pupils has not improved enough since the last inspection.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.9
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.4
National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **good** education with good teaching and learning. The good curriculum gives pupils a wide range of experiences, enhanced by very good activities outside lessons. Very good links with the local schools and community contribute to pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good**, ensuring all pupils learn well through the school, with the strongest teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers make **satisfactory** use of good assessment information, although their personal knowledge of pupils is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good relationships capture pupils' attention and motivate them to learn.
- High behaviour expectations encourage good behaviour and hard work.
- Good explanations and presentations make very good use of resources to improve learning.
- Good support enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to make good progress.
- Variations in the quality of teaching, including teachers' marking, detract from pupils' consistent achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	13 (23%)	25 (45%)	14 (25%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	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.

12. The good overall quality of teaching maintains the standards of provision seen in the previous inspection. Parents and pupils appreciate the good standard of teaching. However, in the intervening period there have been weaknesses in teaching resulting from the very substantial changes in staff. In the last three years, 14 teachers have left the school and further recruitment has been hampered by difficulties in getting sufficient suitable applicants. This position has now been stabilised through very effective management of recruitment and restructuring of responsibilities. During the inspection, few lessons were unsatisfactory and the proportion of lessons graded good and above was higher than previously found. However, there are still variations in the quality of teaching that hamper pupils' consistent achievement of their full potential. In particular, teachers' marking remains inconsistent, a weakness from the last inspection. There are some useful examples within school of clearly-stated marking that helps pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve. However, much other marking is only cursory and does not support further learning.
13. Foundation Stage teaching is consistently good and often very good in both nursery and reception classes, which ensures children learn well. Children of all backgrounds settle very well because of the sensitive way that the staff help the parents and children through the starting period. Very good relationships with parents help the children to feel secure and give them confidence to try hard and do their best. Staff teamwork is very strong and ensures children have access to a wide range of interesting and practical experiences. Children's learning is supported by good resources and relevant visits to places of interest to widen their experiences. Staff continuously and carefully assess children's progress and successfully identify opportunities to move them to the next step in learning. Activities are well organised to make the most flexible use of the facilities, and tasks are well matched to the attainment of the children. Teachers achieve a very good balance between the more formal teaching sessions and the wealth of opportunities for children to explore and choose for themselves. Teaching assistants work very effectively with individuals and small groups, aiding and supporting learning.
14. Teachers and other staff create very positive relationships throughout the school that ensure an effective atmosphere for learning in classrooms. This motivates pupils well and encourages them to try hard. Organisation and management of lessons is good and most teachers have well-established routines that ensure that little time is lost. Teachers' high behaviour expectations are clearly stated and most pupils are keen to meet these, improving their learning. They show confidence and enthusiasm as they engage in all activities and these very positive attitudes have a significant impact on their achievement. In satisfactory but weaker lessons, however, teachers did not do enough to set a good pace to the learning. In some lessons this was due to weaker planning that did not focus the teacher and the pupils sufficiently on specific learning. In a small minority of lessons, teachers did not make enough consistent use of the school's clear behaviour guidelines.

15. Teachers are mostly highly enthusiastic and they make animated explanations that capture pupils' attention very well. A significant contribution to many of these very good presentations is the very good use teachers make of resources. In particular, the new interactive whiteboards installed in some rooms are used with confidence and flair to aid explanations and activities.
16. All teachers have good personal knowledge of pupils that most use effectively to set increasingly secure levels of challenge. For example, teachers question pupils well, often re-phrasing at the right levels to challenge pupils with different levels of attainment. Discussion sessions are effectively used to encourage pupils to think hard about their work and allow teachers to judge success. Teachers make and record increasingly detailed formal assessments that are increasingly steering their planning. Tracking of pupils' progress, for example, gives clear indications of the levels of achievement and allows teachers to focus attention on what needs to be done. However, the use made of the information is variable from class to class. For example, some work is not matched sharply enough to pupils' attainment and requires support in order for the pupils to succeed. This limits pupils' independence in their work and slows the pace of learning.
17. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have good support. Teachers are particularly aware of the needs of these pupils and often plan tasks carefully to ensure they make good progress. Well-trained teaching assistants have good understanding of pupils' needs and of how they can help them to learn. They play an effective part in ensuring that these pupils access all activities in the classroom and in the wider school. Pupils' individual education plans help staff to match work closely to their needs, and teachers make helpful notes on their progress. Close working with pupils individually and in groups often leads to very effective learning.
18. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. This is because assessment is used effectively to analyse pupils' needs and build carefully on their prior learning. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are given good attention and often benefit from intensive small group support by the specialist teacher. In most lessons, teachers carefully identify opportunities for developing pupils' language skills, with special emphasis on developing vocabulary. In the best lessons, skilful questioning, high expectations and a range of approaches are used to draw on pupils' previous knowledge to extend their learning. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards and other visual aids to enable pupils to rehearse language in a meaningful context. A clear emphasis is placed on speaking and listening, with good examples seen in history, personal and social education and in literacy lessons. Effective use is also made of pupils talking in pairs, with teachers modelling the language to be used and revisiting these skills when pupils are invited to present their work to the others. However, occasionally, the needs of pupils are not clearly identified and addressed effectively, for instance where the demands of the tasks are too high or when pupils are not grouped appropriately.

The curriculum

There are **good** learning opportunities for pupils. Enrichment through extra-curricular activities is **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-planned curriculum, very good enrichment and effective links between subjects promote pupils' learning.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is rich and varied, providing a wide range of well-planned, stimulating experiences.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are good.
- The school has planned opportunities to extend the curriculum for its pupils, which is innovative.
- Accommodation and resources are good overall and support pupils' learning.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is inclusive, meets the needs of all pupils, and caters well for the wide range of pupils' abilities and backgrounds within the school. Coverage is now good and satisfies statutory requirements in all areas. Good planning and schemes of work promote good gains in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The school has improved the curriculum since the previous inspection, significantly in ICT and religious education, both of which were identified as weaknesses in the previous report. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good overall. In many classes, strong links between subjects help pupils to learn and place their learning in a wider context.
20. The very good emphasis on individual pupils ensures that provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan well and provide good teaching, while pupils receive good support from the teaching assistants. All staff track pupils' progress efficiently and use individual education plans to monitor success in the carefully selected and set targets. Staff ensure regular liaison with teachers and assistants to ensure an effectively co-ordinated approach to meeting pupils' individual needs.
21. Opportunities for pupils with English as an additional language are carefully planned, especially through visits to enhance pupils' learning. This gives pupils first-hand experience of some of the key concepts in the topics studied. Resources are provided in many of the first languages spoken by pupils. Some benefit from family learning provided by the specialist teacher to consolidate learning, for instance in numeracy. The school enables pupils to learn about other faiths and uses special events like 'Black History Month' to inspire pupils through the use of positive images of black people. However, it does not consistently draw enough on the rich diversity of other languages and cultures, nor make this a strong feature of the curriculum.
22. Very good enrichment activities ensure very good sporting, creative and aesthetic development. Pupils benefit academically and personally from the numerous extra-curricular clubs, which are well attended. Pupils' involvement through theatre visits, theatre groups and artists in residence, for example, enhance and complement the statutory curriculum. Older pupils take part in residential visits, which successfully enhance adventure activities that develop and promote various physical skills. The residential week underpins and consolidates social and moral development as well as developing independence and inter-dependence.
23. The headteacher and subject leaders monitor the curriculum well, ensuring all staff are informed of the results. Policy and planning documents are reviewed regularly and staff monitor the impact of these on teaching and learning. Subject leaders provide good

support to their colleagues, ensuring progression in pupils' knowledge and skills development. The school is developing innovative practices to extend its curriculum by arranging training to assist parents to promote, for example, speaking and listening. Pupils from the oldest classes meet with pupils from other primary schools to discuss how they learn best from the curriculum. The use of interactive whiteboards in a wide range of lessons by both teachers and pupils is promoting improved understanding through a much more visual approach.

24. Resources for learning across the curriculum are good and help to raise standards, particularly in ICT. Staffing is good and is used efficiently to promote mostly good learning. Resources have improved since the previous inspection but the library remains an area for further development. The inadequate ICT resources identified in the previous report have now improved substantially and are now a major factor in the significant improvement achieved in this area. The school's accommodation is good overall, with improvements such as the new computer suite and areas for small groups to work providing improved curriculum access. The building is old but the staff have worked hard, through planned decoration and well-presented displays, to create an appropriate environment for learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance. Pupils are **well** involved in the life of the school and their views are valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very good at looking after the personal needs of each pupil.
- Children new to the school are settled in very well.
- Pupils in Year 6 are supported extremely well in their transfer to secondary school.
- It is unsatisfactory for reception children to walk through the school and cross the main playground to access their outside learning area.

Commentary

25. Pupils are safe and well looked after at Rotherfield. The school site is very secure and a careful check is made on all visitors. Health and safety routines are well established. There is a very good number of staff with first-aid qualifications. Accidents and emergencies are dealt with efficiently and well recorded. Staff are sufficiently vigilant at break times, although it is hazardous for pupils to play around the cars parked at the end of the playground. The plentiful number of trips out of school are carefully organised with the safety of the pupils well in mind. The younger children are well supervised inside and out, but there is insufficient checking of reception children as they move the lengthy distance, often on their own, between their playground and classroom. Overall, the safety and welfare have improved since the last inspection.
26. New children are introduced to school very sensitively. The school realises that a significant number of families have chaotic home lives, so makes a concerted effort to settle parents and children into learning routines as soon as possible. All new nursery and reception families are offered a home visit by the Foundation Stage staff. This not only

familiarises the child with their new teachers, but also gives the staff a chance to gather useful background information to aid well-planned support. The nursery and reception staff have good ties with playgroups and nursery centres so valuable knowledge can be shared on the needs of each new child. Newcomers who arrive at an older age are also warmly welcomed into school life. Established pupils, well used to the arrival of new classmates mid term, are encouraged to act as 'buddies' and to help the new pupils feel part of Rotherfield very quickly. The valuable input of the learning mentors is very useful in settling the concerns of new arrivals as they slot into already established groups. Consequently, new pupils are soon coping confidently with their different surroundings and achieving as well as their peers.

27. The pastoral support of pupils is very good. The tracking of all individual needs is very tight, based on a good knowledge of pupils' backgrounds and family circumstances. Child protection procedures are very well established and the headteacher has much practical experience in dealing with the social services. Not only do pupils have a wide range of adults to whom they can turn for support, but also they can leave notes in the 'Comfort boxes' for confidential advice. Last year's survey revealed a significant number of pupils who felt that they did not have an adult to trust. Much of this can be explained by the very high turnover of staff. The school has moved rapidly and effectively to address this anomaly. The Inclusion Team is a vital cog in the support machine. It reacts very quickly in picking up where help is needed, whether for special educational needs, limited English language, attendance issues or domestic turmoil. The team soon gets the pupil back on track, with support from inside the school or with outside professional assistance. The support of pupils has improved well since the last inspection.
28. The help and guidance given to Year 6 pupils as they move on to secondary school is impressive. The Transition Project is expertly led by the learning mentors. A very well planned six week course at the end of the summer term helps pupils to find out more about their future secondary schools, visit local businesses and even look forward to university. Each pupil prepares their own Transition Passports to advertise their talents and boost their self-esteem. Not only is the project a very good contribution to the curriculum, but it also gives the older pupils confidence and maturity as they leave primary school.
29. Pupils are included effectively in the running of the school. Many have small but important jobs in their classrooms, whilst the older ones are responsible as monitors. The recently started school council is introducing pupils well to citizenship and the responsibilities of looking after their school community. Regular questionnaires highlight the importance the school places on the pupils' views. Academically, pupils are taking good responsibility for their learning through their targets for English and mathematics.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school keeps parents very well informed on what their children are learning.
- The school consults parents regularly and carefully follows up any concerns.

- The school's extended services are very successful in teaching parents how to help their children's learning.
- A significant number of parents do not become sufficiently involved in their children's education.
- The school has very productive links with the local community.
- Very good links with other schools and colleges are of great benefit to pupils and staff alike.

Commentary

30. The school has continued to strengthen ties with parents since the last inspection. The quality of information to parents is now very good. Parents are given plenty of opportunities to find out what their children are learning and how they are getting on. They are given useful details on topics to be covered, homework expectations and planned visits. Annual reports give a clear message on progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but do not give enough detail on progress in the other subjects. With a significant number of Turkish parents in the school, the staff held a special meeting to explain the teaching of English and mathematics and to include them well in learning how to support their children's education from home. The management of behaviour is very effective because parents are very clear about how they can work with the school to share a consistent approach. Of particular note is the very successful work the school has done with parents to increase the attendance rate of the pupils.
31. The views and ideas of parents are valued by the school. Surveys of parents are an annual event and the school takes any concerns very seriously. Parents always receive the results of consultations and they are kept well up to date on how the school is taking on new ideas. Informally the staff are very quick to pick up any hint of concern from parents and to resolve issues. The school is very successful in establishing firm foundations for parental co-operation. It has improved consultation further since the last inspection.
32. The school is working very effectively with the Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zone projects to increase parents' understanding and enjoyment in their children's learning. The courses and meetings are carefully tailored to meet the needs of Rotherfield parents. Recent courses for Turkish parents on the teaching of English and mathematics have helped these families to be more effective in helping their children's education. Popular 'creative workshops' have helped parents to find out more about encouraging and talking to their children as they have fun with home-made designs. The school has made resources and facilities, such as the ICT suite, available for parent groups. Parents are given confidence in their ability through the courses on offer; a few have progressed to employment as teaching assistants. Overall, these support programmes are not only increasing competence in parenting, but also are starting to break down barriers between home and school.
33. Parents are gradually becoming more comfortable in their dealings with their children's school. Nevertheless, many families do not support their children's education enough, whether for cultural reasons or because the parents themselves had a traumatic time in their schooling. The teachers doggedly follow up parents who do not turn up for the termly teacher consultation, but find that attendance at curriculum information evenings and reports from the governors can be thin. Although parents do not run their own parent teacher association, they do give good support to social and fund-raising events. The

increase in the number of volunteers helping with reading and accompanying trips is a positive sign of improving parental support.

34. The school is outward looking and has very strong links with the local community. The headteacher grasps every opportunity to expose the pupils, many of whom have very limited knowledge outside their own homes, to a wide range of experiences. Pupils often go out into the Islington locality and the wider London area to visit shops, libraries, sports facilities and famous landmarks to enhance their learning. The school has very useful links with business for management expertise and gains much for the school and pupils through its involvement in the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities. Liaison with outside services is well established and means that the school can swiftly call upon professional expertise to back up its support of pupils with special needs.
35. Rotherfield works particularly well with other schools to ensure pupils are given as seamless support as possible as they change schools. Positive links with playgroups and nurseries provide a good foundation for the settling of young children starting proper school. The learning mentors are extremely active and well organised in linking with a good range of secondary schools to prepare the older pupils for their transfer. The professional development of the teachers is enhanced by productive links with partner schools in the Education Action Zone. Pupils benefit from being able to share learning and develop socially by taking part in projects and events jointly with other primary schools, such as the Writers Workshop and Super Learning Day. The very good links with a wide range of educational establishments, from playgroups to universities, raises the school's profile in the educational community and provides a raft of extra opportunities to pupils and staff. Links with the community and other schools have improved further since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **very good**. The governing body makes a **good** contribution to the school's leadership and management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher effectively shares her very clear vision of how the school can improve and is steering developments very well.
- Close-knit teamwork with high aspirations is very effective in raising standards.
- The very strong commitment to equal access ensures all pupils achieve well.
- Governors' closer involvement with the school helps to shape the vision for the school's future.
- Very effective and prudent management of the school ensures good value for money.

Commentary

36. Parents and pupils alike value the family feel of the school. Inclusion and care for pupils are embedded in the heart of the school's work. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school and is dedicated to improving standards. The clear desire to provide increasingly better quality education is shared by all staff and governors and is the foundation of the school's growing success.

37. By giving senior staff responsibilities to work as phase leaders, the headteacher has built up a very strong sense of teamwork. This has removed the negative points noted in the previous inspection. Careful recruitment of staff has given the school a greater stability and expertise than at any time in recent years. The headteacher's strategy of maintaining and strengthening the phase teams' knowledge and morale is excellent. The precise targets in their performance management plans challenge them. The very professional arrangements for team training sessions value their work, and increase their skill levels. The raising of aspirations through the leadership teams has already had a substantial impact on improving standards, and bringing two weak subjects (religious education and ICT) well into line with National Curriculum requirements.
38. The communication and flow of information within such a complex structure is very good. The headteacher has very effective support from her deputy and assistant headteachers to oversee the smooth running of the new systems. All aspects of the many procedures for self-evaluation are directed towards raising standards. The subject leaders produce detailed and realistic evaluations of their subjects, which make a very good first step to improvement. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good, resulting in improved provision since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is rightly pursuing the plan to extend the stimulating child-centred ethos into Year 1 as part of the new, larger foundation phase.
39. The partnership between the headteacher and the governing body has improved since the previous inspection. Collectively, governors now exert a good level of influence on the direction of the school. They are more involved in the life of the school and its decision-making processes. Their expertise is valued more, and is used well within the financial management systems. The budget is very well administered, and linked to priorities within an exceptionally detailed school development plan. The governors hold prudent reserves earmarked for particular purposes and contingencies, all to provide best value for the education of the pupils. Relationships are very good, with the valued support of the governors helping the management team to have confidence in attempting new initiatives.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,444,680
Total expenditure	1,512,000
Expenditure per pupil	4,447

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	99,934
Balance carried forward to the next	32,614

40. Funding for pupils from ethnic minorities is effectively targeted to provide for specialist staffing and resources. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is managed and led very well, with both the co-ordinator and the headteacher showing a high level of understanding of pupils' needs. Information from assessment is used well to determine where intervention is needed. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in sharpening its focus on raising pupils' achievement.
41. The management of learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs is good. All staff work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to raise

standards for all pupils with special educational needs. Pupils benefit from clear and regularly monitored individual education plans, which ensure that precise targets are set and progress carefully tracked. The school organisation ensures that these pupils are involved in all aspects of school life. This promotes confidence, self-esteem and positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour. Support staff are well trained and committed to improving their expertise to benefit these pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

42. The staff share a common vision of providing a stimulating and creative learning environment, while retaining the rigour to raise standards. The adults' care and concern for the progress of the children is one of many reasons why they achieve so well. Teaching is consistently good, and often very good. The curriculum is imaginative and planned in such a way that all children are supported and challenged. Twenty-six children enter the nursery in September with several more expected in January. There are twelve children in each of the two reception classes. The children settle very well because of the sensitive way that the staff help the parents and children through the starting period. Very good relationships with parents help the children to feel secure. They also provide good information to enable staff to begin planning relevant work. This is achieved by means of the home visits before the children start, and continuous open-door contacts after that. Parents very much appreciate this high level of support and communication.
43. Staff regularly assess the children's progress and are always on the watch for opportunities to move children to the next step in learning. The activities are well organised to make the most flexible use of the facilities. The teachers achieve a very good balance between the more formal teaching sessions and the wealth of opportunities for children to explore and choose for themselves. The support assistants work very effectively one to one, or with small groups, and the tasks are particularly well matched to the attainment of the children. The number of adults ensures that children thrive amidst the array of fascinating new resources, their eyes aglow with wonder and curiosity. Very good management has helped achieve this significant improvement of provision since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of very effective learning.
- Very good planning makes the most of opportunities for children to interact and mature.

Commentary

44. This area of learning receives a high profile at the start of the nursery year, and the children achieve very well. This is due to very good teaching, very good relationships and a well-planned and ordered environment in which children settle easily and feel secure. They quickly make friends and enjoy each other's company as they explore the learning opportunities in and out of the nursery. They make rapid progress and by the time they start the reception class most children are ready for the slightly more formal approach. They adapt well to the consistent routines, and this shows in the way they listen to the

adults. Children are encouraged to take responsibility. They are becoming confident to work independently on their tasks in preparation for the more formal routines in Year 1. They take turns being monitors, for instance by helping to give out drinks and taking the register to the office. All learn to see the importance of keeping the environment neat and safe, and children tidy up enthusiastically. Behaviour is very good. Because staff are skilled in knowing how young children learn, they plan an effective range of activities to develop confidence and social skills. These lead to good sharing, and a growing interest and concentration, as well as a strong desire to learn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and writing are taught well.
- Every opportunity is seized upon to enhance children's communication skills.
- Occasionally, opportunities are missed in the nursery to extend children's speaking skills.

Commentary

45. Teachers plan carefully to provide a structured range of activities specifically to develop the children's language skills, which are low when they start school. Children achieve well so that some reach the levels expected for their age as they start Year 1, but many are still well below average at this point. Teachers begin the children's 'special books' early in the nursery. These track the children's development from just making marks, through a stage of rough letter shapes, to being able to write their names. Children chatter informally to each other while playing with the wide range of stimulating material around the room, so they extend their enjoyment of communication. However, in some play areas staff miss the opportunity to draw out language and the vocabulary linked to the activity, for example the outdoor play on the tricycle race course.
46. By the end of the nursery year the children have learnt that the words they see in books have a meaning and, during reception, they begin to read some of them. Children learn to relish new words in exciting or humorous stories like 'Polar Bear, Polar Bear'. With very good assistance from the nursery nurses, the teachers encourage the children to learn shapes of the letters and how the sounds make words. No time is wasted and staff provide challenging activities that are well matched to the needs of the children, particularly those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. The learning is fun and highly effective.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching, with very good support, enables all children to learn well through practical activities.
- Occasionally, nursery staff miss opportunities to develop mathematical language in play activities.

Commentary

47. Teachers use practical activities well to help children's understanding of number, shape and size. In the nursery, children handle a wide range of materials, such as water and sand. By reflecting on what they see and feel, they gain the basic experiences to help their understanding. Consequently, children achieve well. Most move from a very low starting point to attain the first of the stepping stones by the time they start in reception. Staff take great care to set out equipment, but do not always take full advantage of it. Adults miss opportunities to extract the mathematical ideas and language from some equipment, for instance the birthday cake table.
48. In reception also, teachers use a wide range of mathematical and play equipment to help children to explore number, pattern and shape. Children learn to count in small groups, where adults can give close attention. Teachers follow group work up well with short, whole-class talks, when children can practise as a group. For instance, the jumping on number mats enabled children to consolidate their learning well and recognise numbers up to eight. The teachers create good learning conditions by effective management, and encourage children to use correct mathematical terms. Skilled questioning helps children develop their own thinking, curiosity and confidence in risking answers. The teachers use precise assessment well. This means they can move all children on successfully, particularly children who have special educational needs and those still new to learning English. By the end of reception, many children achieve well to record simple addition and subtraction sums, but overall standards are still well below average.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides children with good opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- The staff provide a great variety of resources, visits and visitors to enrich the learning.
- The children's computer skills are above average for their age.

Commentary

49. Good teaching and learning enable children to make good progress. Children enter the nursery with a low level of experience. The wide range of activities in and out of the classroom extends the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them well. They love learning about animals and how to look after them. They play with model farms and learn the sounds that animals make and the names of their young. They develop a strong curiosity. The reception class builds well on this curiosity with activities that encourage children to look more closely at things. Children play with hand lenses and learn about light and dark. Staff make using play dough a big adventure. As children share in watching, measuring and handling the glittering ingredients, they learn about scientific change. They achieve well, but by the end of the reception class they are still short of the early learning goals.

50. Children do better in computer skills. They start school with a limited knowledge but, by using the computers in class and in the new ICT suite, they gain skills rapidly and make very good progress. The use of software and handling of the video eye comes naturally to them and in this aspect they reach the early learning goals. Teachers use the 'big book' resources well to help children to understand growth and the passage of time. They take the children around the school, outside the school and to places further afield. In this way, children acquire the language of geography, 'moving and turning', 'left and right', 'near and far'. By careful use of questioning, the teachers help children to learn simple religious ideas about special places and people. The children learn that special events are celebrated in similar ways in many cultures. Teachers assess the children's progress well and build up precise records to hand on to the Year 1 teachers.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps children to develop good co-ordination.
- The children achieve particularly well in outdoor adventurous play.
- The indoor activities are not duplicated in the outdoor play areas.

Commentary

51. Many children start the nursery class with underdeveloped physical skills and benefit well from large equipment such as tricycles and wheeled vehicles. Very good teaching develops these skills well. The children achieve well in gaining confidence and balance, and in improved co-ordination. By the start of the reception year, most are much nearer the early learning goals. The fine finger control of small items, such as holding pencils, brushes and other small objects, is also very limited at the beginning of the year. Consequently, the teachers provide a very large number of opportunities for children to handle a wide range of items that improve finger and grip control. This leads in time to care in accurate formation of letters and numbers. By the end of reception, the children's grip control skills are brought up to nearly the level expected for their age. The teachers use the colourful new outdoor play areas well to enable the children to explore vigorous movement and enjoy climbing and balancing on the large equipment. This aids their confidence and physical development considerably. The teachers carefully track the children's progress through the stepping stones to learning and adjust the activities accordingly. The children who have special educational needs particularly enjoy these activities because they experience success. The indoor curriculum has not yet been brought fully into effect in the outdoor situation.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good direct teaching of skills is combined well with opportunities to learn through play.
- Children are provided with an exciting range of activities that enriches their learning.

Commentary

52. Most children start at the nursery with below average creative skills. The staff enjoy planning a wide range of stimulating and fun activities to enable the children to expand and explore their imagination. The art corner is a busy studio where children explore colour mixing with bare hands, or close observation of bubble-blowing techniques. Much valuable support is given by the adult helpers, who encourage the children particularly well, having established such good relationships with them. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the 'home corners' and other role-play situations. These are particularly valuable for pupils who have special educational needs, as they identify more closely with the imaginative world. Reception teachers provide further

experiences, such as lively music and dance sessions that extend the children's vocabulary as well as skills. The play around the classrooms extends the children's creative ideas well as they pretend to run the 'Bluebird Café', or take over the teacher's corner and set up little tutorial groups to 'teach each other to read'. This input is carefully planned and assessed to enable the teachers to pass on good records to Year 1. The children make very good progress and achieve particularly well to reach the early learning goals at the end of reception. They display lively imaginations and a well-developed, confident approach to creative situations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management are helping provision and standards to improve.
- Good teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Detailed performance data is effectively used to monitor pupils' progress, although marking is not used consistently.
- ICT is not sufficiently harnessed to enhance learning in the subject.

Commentary

53. Overall standards in English are well below those found nationally in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. A high number of pupils start with very low standards in language skills. However, all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well against their prior attainment. This has been due to a large extent to the quality of leadership of the headteacher and the new subject leader. Strong assessment systems provide effective tracking of pupils' progress. These systems help teachers to improve the curriculum and teaching as well as establishing more demanding targets to ensure that pupils achieve well. Very effective intervention strategies, including targeted support for pupils new to learning English, additional literacy support and extra resources are being effectively deployed to raise pupils' achievement.
54. Pupils listen well in lessons and many are willing to respond verbally when texts are discussed. This is because most teachers use questioning well to draw out ideas and information. Although many pupils have limited vocabulary, they are carefully helped to think back to their previous learning and to put their thoughts into words. In the best teaching, teachers revise earlier lessons and make very good use of visual aids, such as interactive whiteboards, and modelling responses to help pupils learn. Speaking is promoted well through good opportunities for pupils to talk with their partners, although teachers make only limited use of drama.
55. Pupils achieve well in their reading because of the improved provision made for guided reading. Most pupils develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words and use the context of the writing to guess meaning. More able pupils express clear preferences and comment cogently on the content of what they read. The emphasis given to teaching non-fiction from the early stages is reflected in their growing skills in using the content page

and index to find information. Older pupils are familiar with a wide range of authors and apply their knowledge well when they discuss texts.

56. Reading is managed well, with pupils routinely given assignments for reading with their parents and supported through the use of volunteers in school. Pupils' progress over time in writing is good. Many write at length and for a variety of purposes. Progress in handwriting, however, is less secure and is variable across the school, except in Year 6, where it is better.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers' good questioning encourages pupils, such as when discussing texts. Explanations and demonstrations are mostly clear and help pupils to know what they need to do when they break into groups. As a result, pupils are quick to begin to apply the skills that have been taught. In the majority of cases, teachers' high expectations are clearly communicated to pupils and set a positive tone for working. Although many teachers ensure they return at the end of the lessons to what pupils were intended to learn, in some lessons, teachers do not do this explicitly enough. Marking of pupils' written work is not consistent enough to help pupils know what they need to do to improve. There are some good examples where plenty of useful feedback is followed up in subsequent work to ensure that targets are achieved. However, this contrasts with others where little comment is given to steer pupils and help them improve. Although many teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards, they do not systematically plan enough opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to enhance and support learning.
58. The subject is well led and managed. There has been a continuing focus on raising pupils' achievement and careful monitoring of pupils' performance. The subject leader, who has been in post for a year, brings a wealth of experience and has a clear vision of how to develop the subject and improve pupils' learning. The leadership by the senior management team is having a very positive impact in developing consistency and team work. As a result of this, the impetus for improvement is being firmly established.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, notably in history, where historical content is used to teach specific vocabulary in a literacy lesson. Older pupils use the Internet and thus develop their research skills to retrieve information. Opportunities for discussion occur in a wide range of subjects, with some good examples of the use of talking partners in a number of lessons. However, there has been insufficient monitoring to ensure that enough opportunities are systematically planned and evaluated.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps pupils achieve well from a very low level of attainment when they start school, although standards are still below average by Year 6.
- Standards are improving and higher attaining pupils do relatively well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and enjoy their lessons in mathematics.

- Good management is moving the subject forward well and helping to raise standards further.
- Assessment in mathematics is good overall but the use of marking to alert pupils to what they need to improve further is inconsistent.

Commentary

60. Standards in mathematics are well below average by the end of Year 2, and below average by the end of Year 6. However, all pupils achieve well and are making good overall progress from their very low attainment when entering the school. Those pupils with special educational needs have clear support that links well with their individual education plans. A particularly strong aspect of pupils' attainment is the relatively high proportion of Year 6 pupils in line to reach the higher than expected Level 5 attainment. This is in line with schools nationally and well above that of similar schools. The improvements can be clearly attributed to aspects of improved teaching. For example, improved assessment procedures and analysis of data have suggested better organisation of classes in Year 6 and the introduction of booster classes. Emphasis is placed in lessons from Year 1 on using concepts as well as understanding them. Problem solving is a key feature and is used in mental mathematics as well as the main aspect of the lesson. As a result, standards throughout the school are higher.
61. Teaching and support staff continually encourage all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to respond to questions in main class sessions as well as in groups. This not only promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills but methodically develops their thought processes when they are required to explain what strategies they used to arrive at their answers. This systematic approach is having a positive impact on raising the level of mathematical understanding and confident use of mathematical vocabulary, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
62. Throughout the school, the sequential use of the planned national numeracy programme of teaching numbers, shape, space and measures gives pupils increasing confidence to apply mathematical learning to everyday situations. Most teachers now use the interactive whiteboards very effectively for presentations and displaying resources. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about positional words and use them in the context of a countryside scene, where pupils describe the man 'next to' the woman. The visual representation not only captivated the focus of these young pupils, but also secured their concentration. This is a strength of the school's visual approach to mathematics.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although it varies from satisfactory to excellent. When teaching is just satisfactory, expectations are lower, the pace is less brisk and a minority of pupils become restless and passively discouraged. As a result, the progress pupils make can be inconsistent from class to class and this reduces the overall acceleration to achieve national averages by Year 6. The school acknowledges this and is continuing to focus on improving teaching to secure more consistent teaching throughout the school. When teaching is good or better, it is brisk and teachers have high expectations of achievement. Teachers use 'quick fire' probing questioning and manage pupils well through interesting delivery and tasks well matched to pupils' ability.
64. Many lessons are lively and capture pupils' interest and, as a result, attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are good. Pupils are eager to explain in their mental

sessions what strategies they use to perform different operations, particularly during the problem-solving activities. Most pupils through the school are attentive and keen to learn and those in Years 5 and 6 are becoming particularly self-assured. They work well independently and collaboratively, showing respect and consideration for others.

65. The tracking of pupils' progress is good and helps teachers to amend and improve their approaches to the subject. It also helps them to establish challenging targets for pupils to promote better levels of achievement. For example, pupils' tracking sheets graphically identify that pupils with English as an additional language perform well, often better than their peers. Some day-to-day assessment is good overall and used well to inform future teaching and planning. In most lessons, teachers make a secure link between teaching objectives identified in the introductory session and objective appraisal in the plenary session. Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure a consistent, collaborative approach to learning, resulting in good overall achievement. The arrangements for teaching in Year 6 ability groups support all levels of pupil ability well and help them to make good progress. However, teachers' marking is not used consistently through the school. Although some teachers give useful feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve, other marking is merely encouraging or indicates correctness.
66. The recently appointed co-ordinator leads the subject well. She works well with other staff, monitors closely and analyses data to provide performance data for all staff. Planning is carefully monitored to ensure statutory requirements and parity of opportunity for all pupils. This helps to promote raising standards in all areas of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The basic skills of numeracy, including mental calculations and problem solving, are taught well throughout the school. Pupils use these skills in subjects, such as science, ICT and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress because of good teaching overall.
- Teaching quality varies and does not consistently promote the best learning.
- Computer and numeracy skills are not consistently used to support investigations.

Commentary

68. Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally well below those expected for the pupils' age. Pupils make good progress overall and achieve well in lessons. However, their scientific knowledge is often relatively better than their skills in investigating, which are sometimes weak. Standards at the end of Year 6 are nearer to the expected levels but are still below average. Improved stability in the teaching staff and teaching expertise ensures pupils' achievement is good and they continue to make good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. After several years of weak results, the upturn in standards last year is an improvement that reflects stronger teaching, based on very good tracking of pupils' progress. Also, more time is given to science since the previous inspection.
69. Teaching varies significantly in quality and ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. Overall it is good and helps pupils to increase their skills and understanding from a very low level. Teachers' planning is based well on national guidelines. It develops pupils' knowledge in a smooth progression throughout the school. The skills of experiment and investigation are taught best in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching style is more practical. Teachers present interesting topics and create effective learning conditions for pupils to work in quiet, orderly classrooms.
70. In Year 2, teaching places too much emphasis on gaining knowledge. Lessons are made active by encouraging pupils to reflect on their ideas, discuss them in groups and note them down. The pupils acquire a sound fact base about materials, living things and forces. Their lively study of the needs of babies, teenagers and adults taught them about diet, but not as much about fair testing and recording data and proving conclusions.
71. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 places greater emphasis on developing scientific skills, including those of investigation. In a Year 5 lesson about gases, the teacher expected pupils to do most of the thinking for themselves. She guided pupils well in the difficult area of reasoning how evidence observed leads to valid conclusions. The pupils took the topic to increasingly difficult levels of proof. They were proud of their ability to persevere with abstract thinking. They developed an intensity of curiosity rarely seen in schools. This quality of teaching is excellent, and the ownership the pupils felt of their learning was outstanding.
72. Leadership is good and it is a key part of the co-ordinators' action plan to promote this style of teaching and learning. Tasks in science lessons are mostly well matched to the range of abilities in the classes. Where this happens, pupils who have special educational needs benefit and experience an equal measure of success. This is not consistent, however, nor is the regular use of pupils' numeracy and computer skills. The

co-ordinators have effectively strengthened the subject but have not had sufficient time to monitor the teaching to identify these inconsistencies.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong management and effective action have raised standards well.
- Good teaching strategies develop pupils' basic skills and allow them to achieve well.
- Applications in other subjects and pupils' independence in choosing them could be better.

Commentary

73. Good subject leadership has encouraged staff to use the school's new and enhanced computer resources more effectively than in the past. A good programme of national and school-based training has increased confidence and expertise. As a result, all teachers use the computer suite effectively. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to reach standards in line with those expected for their age. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and, because pupils enter school with very low standards, this represents very good achievement. The strongest areas are linked to word-processing, graphics and multi-media presentations. Year 6 pupils are confident in finding files, moving text about and illustrating it. They open up the Internet rapidly and are proud of their research work in various subjects.
74. Teaching is good overall. The good planning by all teachers takes pupils through a carefully structured set of learning steps, from a work scheme that has been well adapted for this purpose. Classes take turns in using the computer suite, which ensures that all pupils get equal time on computer activities. Staff expertise has grown considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress because they are constantly acquiring new skills. For the first time this year, the Year 6 curriculum fulfils the complete range of required topics. The pupils are looking forward to using computers for sensing information in science lessons, and controlling devices by computer in technology projects. Additional resources have been bought to cater for this, although at present the use of computers by pupils as a classroom tool is more limited. This also inhibits pupils' independence to select their own applications. Pupils have a positive attitude to computer work, as shown by their initiative and willingness to help each other.
75. The interactive whiteboard project is popular with teachers and pupils, and has proved particularly effective in improving teaching. Teachers plan carefully to use the facility to project lesson materials onto a large screen. The clearer visual effects help pupils' understanding in all subjects but contribute to learning in English and mathematics. The teachers are proud of their expertise in this field, and they act as a lead school for this strategy. It is very motivating for pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs. They often find the graphics easier to understand than spoken instructions. Very good management by the co-ordinator and project manager has turned this subject around from a weakness to a strength of the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Teachers use a satisfactory range of opportunities to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. Teachers regularly make good use of the classroom projectors to

make learning more effective in English, mathematics and science. The co-ordinator would like to build up the quantity of software and mobile computers to allow more constant use in a wider range of subjects. Older pupils learn about e-mails and the school website, as part of their language and communication awareness.

HUMANITIES

77. Work was sampled in history and geography, with only three lessons seen in history and one in geography. It is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. From evidence of work seen, including analysis of pupils' work, standards in both subjects are broadly in line with what is expected in Years 2 and 6. In both subjects, learning is enhanced through a very good range of opportunities such as visits, especially in history, where each year group gets an opportunity for a visit at least every term. These are used effectively to enrich pupils' learning.
78. In the **history** lessons, emphasis was put on enabling pupils to develop a sense of the past. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, shared information about toys their parents and grandparents had when they were children. This was reinforced by the teacher discussing different toys she brought herself. Good questioning enabled pupils to discuss and suggest how they were made, the materials they were made from and how they might be used. Year 4 pupils showed sound understanding of the Tudor period as they compared food eaten by rich and poor people. The teacher used resources and illustrations well, including the interactive whiteboard to illustrate different types of menus.
79. In the **geography** lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher successfully based pupils' learning on their own experiences while extending their understanding of the local area. As pupils sketched what they saw out of the windows, they observed aspects of the environment and described a range of human and physical features. The amount of past work seen in pupils' books was limited, although pupils spoke with interest of what they had done, including gathering information from books and the Internet. Some work was well presented, for example when Year 6 pupils had drawn maps to illustrate their growing understanding of rivers.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall good teaching ensures pupils achieve well through the school.
- Improved planning fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Commentary

80. Pupils' standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those described in the locally agreed syllabus. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection, when religious education was judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know about festivals of light, caring for each other and symbols used in different faiths. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about places of worship, celebrations and the importance of faith to each different culture. Pupils' achievement improves as they pass through the school, peaking in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are doing particularly well. They appreciate how

important religion is to different faith groups, and understand that people from different cultures follow rules determined by their own faiths. Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education as pupils listen and enact stories relating to different faiths and customs, including the brave acts people undertake to change unfair practices and beliefs.

81. Teaching is good overall, although there are variations. Relationships between staff and pupils are of high quality and this contributes positively to pupils' learning as well as encouraging good attitudes to their work and respect for each other. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively to make good progress with the other pupils. The curriculum overview clearly identifies what is to be taught in each year group, and this helps teachers in their planning. Resources, including artefacts, are good, clearly labelled and set out in an appropriate topic-related approach in the resource room.
82. Teachers place good emphasis on developing discussion skills and this is effective, particularly amongst the older pupils. This approach to meeting the needs of all pupils ensures that pupils who are new to learning English are given every opportunity to develop the necessary language to take part in the lessons. In Years 5 and 6, teachers encourage pupils to use a wide range of learning strategies, particularly discussing and investigating. These pupils record and present their work well. In other classes, the knowledge and understanding is conveyed through listening but the recording of work is limited. Although there is some strong support for pupils' learning, particularly in lessons, teachers' marking is much more variable: little gives pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve their standards of work.
83. Leadership of the subject has been satisfactory, although further development is needed in monitoring planning, teaching, learning and standards. The school acknowledges this and, when the new co-ordinator assumes responsibility, it is an area to be addressed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Few lessons could be seen during the inspection in most of these subjects, and no lessons were seen in physical education. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology and two were seen in music. As a result, inspectors sampled each subject through examination of school records, curriculum planning and pupils' past work where available. Discussions were held with co-ordinators. It is not possible to make firm judgements about provision, standards or teaching in these subjects. Co-ordinators' work is satisfactory and all have created good initial action plans to steer their work. However, there have been few opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning, so their ability to contribute to development planning has been limited.
85. In **music**, the school's provision is supplemented by the contribution of a music specialist who takes all classes on alternate lessons. This is planned in close partnership with class teachers, which increases their confidence in the subject. In lessons seen, teaching was good and helped pupils to achieve well. Secure control and classroom management helped pupils to gain confidence in making choices and expressing their ideas, although standards of attainment were below average. In assemblies, pupils respond very well and sing with enjoyment. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning in out-of-school clubs, including the recently established school choir.

86. In **physical education**, planning indicates that all strands of the subject are covered and the school has obtained resources to assist those teachers who are less confident than their colleagues. The school has no green space of its own, although there are useful outside areas and access to a nearby swimming pool. An impressive range of after-school clubs enhances pupils' opportunities and contributes to their learning and physical development. Pupils are encouraged to take part in inter-school clubs and competitions. Good links with outside experts contribute to the teaching, particularly of sports skills.
87. There was little evidence in **design and technology** and few lessons were timetabled during the inspection. However, past work indicates that pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the design process, make drawings and identify necessary tools and materials. In some lessons, pupils follow outline worksheets that ensure all aspects of the designing process are covered. By Year 6, pupils identify the strengths of different materials for bridges and ways to strengthen their models. They show good progress in being able to discuss their work, and make suggestions with increasing confidence.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well through the school.
- A very good range of extra-curricular opportunities successfully enriches pupils' experiences and extends their skills.

Commentary

88. Standards in art and design by Year 6 are average, representing good achievement through the school. This confirms the strengths in the subject identified in the last report. However, a number of important measures, including revisions to the curriculum, have been put into place to improve provision. The provision is much enhanced by the wide range of additional activities that have been established. The use of artists-in-residence has a substantial motivating and enriching impact on both teachers and pupils. They make a significant contribution to the art curriculum that pupils thoroughly enjoy. This has also contributed to art clubs, including those specifically targeted at those pupils with identified gifts and talents in the subject. The quality of this provision can be seen in artwork around the school and has rightly been recognised in the recently achieved Arts Mark Award. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, although there are strengths in the clear plans to improve the monitoring of the subject.
89. Throughout the school, good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers prepare for lessons well with good attention to the necessary resources and clear arrangements for managing the classes. Pupils undertake a wide range of activities that help to develop their skills successfully over time. There are particular strengths in work that is rooted in pupils' responses to the work of famous artists. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils looked at prints and began to discuss the different ways that artists had painted portraits. This led to pupils developing clear ideas of how they would wish to create a self-portrait, although the teacher missed opportunities to extend their discussion of the paintings that he showed. Year 6 pupils looked closely at sections of larger works, interpreting them in different media. The very positive atmosphere in the lesson enabled pupils to make supportive and cogent comments on the quality of each other's work.
90. Throughout the school, teachers give good explanations and demonstrations that promote pupils' confidence in their work. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to try out new skills and techniques for themselves as well as practising and refining their skills. Good attention is paid to encouraging pupils to observe very carefully when looking at pictures and drawing still-life objects. As a result, pupils speak with increasing confidence about attributes such as colour, tone, line and composition.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. Only two lessons could be observed in this area of the school's work, although inspectors saw many elements in other lessons. For example, the good use of discussion helps pupils gain confidence in discussing their beliefs. All classes have regular opportunities for discussion, sometimes through 'circle time'. The school is a harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status and display tolerance and respect for each other.

Pupils receive good support from the staff that provides opportunities where they can learn to be responsible, for example in the school council. The school has a carefully planned programme for sex education and drug awareness. In personal, social, health education and citizenship, pupils very successfully and enthusiastically accept responsibility for verbalising their feelings. This promotes social and personal development well and contributes significantly to the very positive demeanour of the pupils. They recognise the need for rules and express during class discussions the unfair way people are treated, as was observed in a Year 5 lesson when pupils talked with great sensitivity about the plight of Rosa Parks. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and, through 'circle time', provide regular opportunities to discuss school issues. Throughout all lessons, pupils are made to feel valued, secure, confident and aware.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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