

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TIDEMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Deptford

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100706

Headteacher: Mr M Elms

Lead inspector: Mrs S Vale

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 268127

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;	249
School address:	Frankham Street London
Postcode:	SE8 4RN
Telephone number:	020 8692 3470
Fax number:	020 8691 7282
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms A Ibitson
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> November 1999
HMI inspection	November 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Tidemill Primary School is situated in a densely populated area of Deptford in the London Borough of Lewisham. Many pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The area is highly diverse socially, ethnically and culturally. It is recognised as being in the lowest 10% of all wards nationally. There are 249 pupils on roll. Of these 88% are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with approximately 66% learning English as an additional language. There are 36 different languages spoken among the pupils, with the most frequently spoken languages being English Creole (12%), Yoruba (15%), Vietnamese (12%), Albanian (11%) and Somali (4%). There are 69 pupils who are refugees and asylum seekers, and four Traveller children. Mobility, at 45%, is very high, with many pupils starting and leaving the school at other times than expected. Approximately two-thirds of the school community are entitled to free school meals. Children's attainment on entry is very low, often due to literacy and numeracy skills not being well developed, low socio-economic circumstances and the fact that many children are learning English as an additional language. The school has a chequered history, with three headteachers in the last four years. It was deemed to be in special measures in 1999 but was judged to have improved sufficiently to be giving an acceptable standard of education in November 2002. In 2003, the school was judged to be the fourth most improved school in the country. The headteacher was appointed in 2001 in a new initiative known as a 'federation', which meant that he was in charge of both Tidemill and the school where he was already the substantive head.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22476	Mrs S Vale	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology
9406	Mr R Cottington	Lay inspector	
22704	Mr G Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
22424	Ms K Taylor	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Information and communication technology Music
19817	Mrs J Dowsett	Team inspector	Science Special educational needs Physical education Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective and inclusive school. Children achieve very well and make really good progress because of excellent leadership and a high percentage of good teaching. The school ensures that all children do as well as they can. As a result of the tracking of pupils' attainment from the national tests at seven and then at eleven, pupils' achieve very well and their achievement is in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are as expected in most areas of learning. Standards by the age of seven and eleven are below the national average in English and below expectations in information and communication technology. In mathematics and science they are in line with what is expected. The school is managed very well on a daily basis. The governing body is knowledgeable and governs well. A stimulating curriculum promotes high levels of achievement. Partnership with parents is good. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent and gives purpose and drive to the school.
- There is good provision for special educational needs, English as an additional language and 'new arrivals'.
- Teaching overall is good, with over one-third very good. Teaching assistants support children's learning well.
- Children achieve very well at this school and show good behaviour and good attitudes to their learning, but they are not yet fully involved in their own self-assessment.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage is very good. This enables children to make a really good start to school life.
- Standards are below national expectations in English, and in information and communication technology which is not yet used effectively enough across the curriculum.
- Standards in physical education are above national expectations by the age of seven, and in history standards are above what is expected by the age of eleven.
- There is a good partnership with parents.

There have been very significant improvements in performance since the last inspection. Key issues for development identified in the previous inspection report have been tackled rigorously and effectively. The drive to make improvements has been strong and successful. Standards in the Foundation Stage have improved. Teaching and learning have improved and a positive learning ethos has been established within the school. Behaviour has improved and children are keen to learn and want to come to school. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has been central to this process.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

RESULTS IN NATIONAL CURRICULUM TESTS AT THE END OF YEAR 6, COMPARED WITH:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	C	E	D
mathematics	E*	B	D	A

science	E	C	D	B
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*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - very low.  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

In the Foundation Stage, many children start school with very low levels of attainment. More than one-third do not have any pre-school experience. By the end of reception they are on course to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. This is a considerable achievement, given their very low starting point. They are unlikely to reach expected levels in communication, language and literacy. They benefit from high-quality teaching and achieve really well. At the infant and junior stages children are also achieving very well. Standards in English are improving but remain below national averages both in national tests and as seen from inspection evidence. In mathematics and science, current standards are similar to national averages. In information and communication technology standards are below national expectations. It is not used sufficiently in other subjects, although children are benefiting from new equipment. Those with special educational needs, more able pupils or those who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve very well. Together with good teaching, this means they are achieving well in lessons and progressing as fast as they can.

Children's attitudes to the school and their learning have improved a great deal and are good. Behaviour overall is good in and around the school. This is a huge improvement since the previous inspection. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance and punctuality are greatly improved and are now very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a good quality of education for its children. It overcomes many barriers well, such as high mobility amongst children, the large numbers of refugees and children learning English as an additional language. Teaching overall is good, with just over one third being very good. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve and as a result, their learning moves forward quickly. Priority is given successfully to promoting equal opportunities. Assessment procedures are very detailed in reading and writing and mathematics and are used effectively to help plan children's programmes of work. However, as yet, children are not involved in assessing their own work and progress. Support staff are used really well to help children acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum provides a good range of activities that motivate all children to learn. There are opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision as well as the use of visits and visitors. Children are cared for and supported very well. The school's partnership with parents and its links with the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. The daily management of the school is of high quality and enables everyone to get on with tasks successfully. The school development plan reflects a determination to go on improving. There is an effective senior management team that helps drive developments forward positively and quickly. The school analyses data very carefully to bring about improvements. High priority is given to staff development and training.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**



The parents hold the school in very high regard. The children are very pleased to be at the school, knowing that they feel valued and are helped to do well in their learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in information and communication technology and ensure that it is used by pupils across a full range of subjects.
- Raise standards in English and extend the current assessment arrangements to include speaking and listening.
- Marking does not always provide enough guidance in how pupils may improve their learning or involve them sufficiently in assessing their own work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved by areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is very good throughout the school. Value-added data available to the school about children's achievements between the infants and the juniors is very good and shows the school to be in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Children start school with a low level of attainment, particularly in communication, language and literacy, numeracy, and personal, social and emotional development. They reach many of the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The 2004 national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 show that standards in English are below average. In mathematics and science, the standards achieved are average. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations. History standards by the age of eleven are above those expected. Standards are above national expectations in physical education by the age of seven and they are above national expectations in athletics by the age of eleven.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage receive very good support and consequently make a good start and achieve very well from a very low baseline.
- Achievement in both infant and junior classes is very good.
- Attainment in both Years 2 and 6 is below that expected in English.
- Literacy and ICT skills are below average across the curriculum.
- Standards in history are above those expected for pupils by age eleven and above national expectations in physical education by the age of seven and in athletics by age eleven.

#### **Commentary**

##### **The Foundation Stage**

1. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is very low, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical, personal, social and emotional development. During their time in the Foundation Stage children make very good progress. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy, by the time they leave reception.

##### **Key Stage 1**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (11.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.0 (12.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.9 (14.8)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In the last three years, results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven show a significant improvement against national averages and when compared to those in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that this year, standards in mathematics are securely in line with those nationally, with clear evidence of an upward trend in reading, writing and science.
3. Current standards are below the national average in English, but in line in mathematics and science. Interpretation skills for problem solving and investigation in science are less well honed, due to the significant number of pupils with English as an additional language. The school acknowledges this and has already put strategies in place to address the issue. Pupils' reading skills are in line with the national average, but writing, speaking and listening skills are below those normally expected for pupils of this age.

## Key Stage 2

### STANDARDS IN NATIONAL TESTS AT THE END OF YEAR 6 – AVERAGE POINT SCORES IN 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.9 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.7 (27.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.0 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The situation for pupils aged eleven is similar. Despite a dip in 2004 there has been a dramatic improvement in results over the past three years. The school analysed reasons for the dip, which include increased mobility amongst pupils, larger numbers of pupils with special educational needs within the year group and the fact that, during the previous year, this particular cohort of pupils had been taught by four different teachers, due to long-term sickness. Inspection evidence confirms that currently attainment is below the national average in English, but in mathematics and science it is similar to national averages.

## Across the school

5. Pupils' overall achievement throughout the school is very good, due to excellent leadership and the consistently high standard of teaching. The teaching staff is now stable, subject co-ordinators are effective, resources are much improved and the staff are overall operating as an effective and committed team. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. They make good progress in their work and are successful in meeting their targets on their individual education plans. These are regularly reviewed.
6. Standards in English by Year 2 are below average in speaking, listening and writing and average in reading. Pupils listen carefully and with sustained attention to their teachers and to others. As many pupils have English as an additional language, teachers speak clearly using relevant vocabulary and reiterate as required asking questions to confirm understanding. The support assistants adopt a similar process, which helps promote understanding as well as develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils attempt to write at length, but limited vocabulary and comprehension skills reduce the amount of writing normally expected for pupils of this age. Pupils display

very positive attitudes and persevere with letter formation and overall presentation. By Year 6, pupils also achieve very well. Speaking and listening skills are much improved and teachers provide opportunities in lessons to promote and extend them. Pupils read well in a variety of contexts.

7. The high proportion of pupils who enter the Nursery and other year groups with little or no prior knowledge of English make very good progress in acquiring spoken English. As a result, most who have attended the school for a while can converse reasonably well by the time they leave the school.
8. Standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 and Year 6, with clear evidence of an upward trend. Achievement is very good overall, in a large part due to the very good teaching seen, particularly the lively introductions using the 'smart' board, an interactive approach and making mathematics 'fun lessons'. This encourages very positive attitudes, very good behaviour and a desire to learn. These features impact positively on all groups of pupils.
9. By Year 6, pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of the nature of science but are slightly less secure in their development of investigative and problem-solving skills. The recent dip in standards is attributed to a different cohort with a large number of pupils with special educational needs who, in the previous year, had been taught by four different teachers. This has been dealt with effectively and the upward trend in standards recovered. Similarly in junior classes, pupils' understanding and knowledge are developing well, leading to improved standards. The school's focus on improving the investigative aspect of science is beginning to have a positive impact, and opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively support this improvement.
10. From an early stage, pupils are taught basic computer skills, but limited access to computers to develop and use skills across the curriculum is limiting the progress of all pupils. Standards in history by Year 6 are good and pupils display good chronological awareness and skills of enquiry. Standards in physical education are above those expected nationally by age seven and pupils receive a full curriculum, including athletics where they achieve above national expectations by the age of eleven, and a programme for swimming which includes pupils from the infant classes.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress in their work and are successful in meeting the targets on their individual education plans. These are regularly reviewed. Pupils on the gifted and talented register achieve well because work is generally sufficiently challenging.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and relationships, and all aspects of their personal development, are good. Their behaviour during the school day is good, and at times in lessons it is very good. Attendance and punctuality levels are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships across the school are very good and underpin a very positive and inclusive ethos.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy lessons and other activities.

- The school places a strong emphasis on behaviour management and deals with all forms of harassment and racial insensitivity very effectively.
- There have been remarkable improvements in attendance and punctuality.

## Commentary

- The school has very successfully raised the standards of behaviour during the past two years. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection said that this had been the most significant area of improvement in recent times. Behaviour is good in most lessons. During breaks, pupils generally behave well, although there are occasional incidents of misbehaviour. However, relationships across the whole school are very good and reflect the very positive school ethos. Pupils from different religious or cultural backgrounds are dealt with well by staff and the school presents itself as a friendly, welcoming and secure community. The number of exclusions is well below that of other local schools.
- There is a very wide range of backgrounds represented in the school; currently, 36 different languages are spoken. Despite these differences pupils of all backgrounds form very close friendships with each other. In lessons they work very well together in pairs or groups and provide each other with support. The friendly and caring attitudes of nearly all pupils make a major contribution to their learning and progress. In addition, all staff provide very good role models for the pupils.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very strong. They are given a range of opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility not only within the school environment but also in the wider local community. Older pupils provide very good role models when carrying out certain duties within the school, for example as a ranger (prefect) or playground friend. In the wider community, they are actively involved in environmental issues, for example the junior citizenship project or the graffiti-busters' team. Pupils' cultural awareness is well provided for through the understanding of major faiths as well as the opportunity to explore their own different experiences, values, beliefs and culture.
- Pupils who learn English as an additional language have good attitudes to school. They, like other pupils, concentrate, behave well and demonstrate a strong commitment to their learning. The very good relationships and racial harmony among pupils from very diverse ethnic backgrounds are particular strengths of this school.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	30	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	26	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	18	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0

Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	47	2	0
Black or Black British – African	48	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	11	0	0
Chinese	5	0	0
Any other ethnic group	39	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

16. There has been a dramatic improvement in the school's attendance levels over the past two years. This very good improvement is the result of a range of initiatives, including very effective monitoring, speedy follow up when pupils are absent and stressing to parents the importance of good attendance and punctuality. The appointment of a member of staff with special responsibility for this area of work, and the commitment and hard work of the member of staff concerned, have also contributed to these very positive results and helped raise achievement.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.6

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence in 2003/4.*

17. The significant improvements in standards of behaviour, pupils' attitudes and relationships brought about through a combination of very effective policies, committed staff and an ethos of care and mutual respect have resulted in a very positive and effective learning environment.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its children. Strengths include the excellent leadership and very good management of the school, supported by good teaching and learning. There is very good care and support for children and their families. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and the whole curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities. Good teaching and staff deployment mean that children achieve as well as they can in national tests.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- All teachers are very conscientious and have high expectations of their pupils.
- In the Foundation Stage and in mathematics throughout the school, teaching and learning are very good.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are keen and work hard, and this contributes very well to their learning.

- Teachers use ICT well as a tool to support their teaching, but do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend their skills.
- Assessment is very good in the Foundation Stage, in mathematics and in some aspects of English.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked; however, pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work and learning.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	20 (40%)	25 (50%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

#### **Commentary**

- Teaching and learning are even better than they were at the time of the last inspection. The table above shows that almost all of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and there is a high proportion of very good teaching. Evidence gained from looking at pupils' past work and talking to parents confirms that teaching and learning have been good over time. A particularly strong feature of teaching is that teachers welcome feedback, regularly reflect on their practice and continually strive to improve it.
- Staff throughout the school are well organised and very conscientiously plan and prepare lessons. They know what they want pupils of different abilities to learn, and clearly communicate this to them. The basic skills are largely taught very well because staff have a good knowledge of subjects. This results from very good training, very strong teamwork and the very good leadership of the school.
- Specialist teaching currently supports music, physical education, ICT, art and design, design and technology, religious education, history and geography. This has ensured overall good teaching in these lessons, but there are shortcomings. The constraint of specialist teaching on the timetable restricts the flexibility for teachers to build on pupils' ideas immediately.
- In the Foundation Stage, the teachers' very good knowledge of the Early Years curriculum means that children are taught consistently well. Lessons are very well planned and challenge children's learning.
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning across most subjects are good, and in mathematics they are very good. In particular, there is a considerable amount of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage, English, science and physical education. Teachers in all classes have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They keep pupils working hard and frequently set challenging and interesting tasks that get them thinking and learning well. Teachers usually strike a good balance between whole-class teaching and pupils working independently on tasks, but occasionally teachers talk for too long and pupils then do not have enough time to practise their skills. This was also the main reason why teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in two lessons seen, despite both teachers' otherwise good teaching skills. Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning.
- English is taught well. The current whole-school focus on developing pupils' skills in speaking in lessons across all subjects is very effective. The school has rigorously addressed weaknesses in the teaching of reading identified at the last inspection, so that it is now taught very well. Science teaching is also good.
- Teaching assistants are well trained, well briefed about their role and well deployed to support pupils, including those who have special educational needs or additional needs in learning English. During whole-class teaching sessions, they often quietly and unobtrusively provide

additional input for pupils and keep them on task and learning at a good rate. Pupils are very keen to learn and this makes a very strong contribution to their learning. Even when they find work challenging, they persevere and work very hard, and most sustain very good levels of concentration.

25. Teachers are using the new interactive whiteboards very well to enhance teaching across a number of subjects. This provides pupils with lots of visual clues to enhance learning. They respond very well when these are used and often sigh when they are turned off. By observing their teachers using the interactive whiteboards, pupils learn about some ICT techniques, and occasionally individuals are invited to participate. Pupils also develop a better understanding of the practical uses of ICT. However, a significant weakness in the teaching of ICT is that teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to use computers themselves. The few classroom computers that are available are underused, as is the ICT suite.
26. The school has established satisfactory systems for checking individual pupils' attainment and progress across all subjects. Assessment is very good in the Foundation Stage and in mathematics. It is also very good in the reading and writing aspects of English; the school has yet to establish a system for formally assessing all pupils' progress in speaking and listening. The information gained from assessment is used well to support teaching and to identify which pupils might benefit from additional special needs support, catch-up provision and booster classes. Key weaknesses that are identified in pupils' attainments feed back into whole-school curriculum planning.
27. Day-to-day assessment in lessons across subjects is good. Teachers question pupils well so that those who experience difficulty are quickly identified and given extra support or further explanations. Pupils' work is marked regularly, and this is often done well in English, where improved systems have been introduced. However, in general there are missed opportunities to provide critical feedback for pupils through marking so that they know what they need to do to improve, or to encourage them to regularly correct their mistakes through further practice. In addition, although some good practice is evident, particularly in science, in general pupils are not given enough responsibility for assessing their own work and learning.
28. Teachers and the support staff promote pupils' personal development very well. They treat pupils very kindly and very positively and give them lots of praise and encouragement. Staff understand that some pupils find learning difficult and do all they can to support them. Through group work, they encourage pupils to work co-operatively. This makes a good contribution to learning since pupils have lots of opportunities to learn from one another.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are as well taught as their peers. Teachers draw up an appropriate plan for each pupil on the special needs register, with guidance from the co-ordinator. Teachers and teacher assistants liaise well overall, planning activities that are related to short-term targets in individual education plans. When pupils are withdrawn to work in pairs or individually on focused spelling tasks they make very good progress. However, in some junior English lessons, work planned is too difficult and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Teachers make good use of the trained and committed assistants. Teacher assistants know the pupils well and give good personal and academic support during lessons and small-group work. Systems for communicating pupil progress during lessons are currently informal.

## The Curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good**. It provides a good range of relevant and interesting opportunities and meets statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The quality and quantity of resources and accommodation are **satisfactory**.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from very good learning opportunities.
- A good range of events and extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum.
- The constraints of specialist teaching on the timetable restrict the flexibility for teachers to build on pupils' ideas immediately.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT across all subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for new arrivals is good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

## **Commentary**

30. The curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development well. The school provides a good curriculum based on all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with personal, social and health education, religious education and the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Children in the Foundation Stage have a very good range of opportunities across all areas of learning. This prepares them appropriately before they undertake the infant curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
31. The curriculum is purposeful and relevant to pupils' learning needs. Learning opportunities are often varied and interesting. Useful links are made between different subjects. The curriculum is underpinned by a planning framework, based on a two-year rolling programme. This ensures appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum without repetition of the content in mixed-age classes.
32. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The range of responsibilities offered to pupils, the high expectations of their conduct and the School Council make a positive contribution. The school provides good personal support, ensuring very good access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special needs. Appropriate attention is given to drugs and sex education, and pupils' understanding of citizenship is developed well through themed units of work.
33. There is good support for learning outside lessons. The school arranges a good range of interesting visits and events that motivate pupils. For example, a local artist helped pupils to remove graffiti from the local area and then paint their own graffiti wall within the playground. The residential trip for Year 6 pupils provides good support for the physical education curriculum and pupils' personal and social development. The good range of extra-curricular clubs includes sport, gymnastics, music tuition and chess. Participation in sport is good and the school has enjoyed significant success in local competitions. Participation in the arts is very good, with musical and dance links being made within the locality, for example with the Laban International School of Contemporary Dance.
34. Teaching staff are generally well qualified to teach the curriculum. Specialist teaching currently supports music, physical education, ICT, art and design, design and technology, religious education, history and geography. This has ensured overall good teaching in these lessons, but there are shortcomings. The constraint of specialist teaching on the timetable restricts the flexibility for teachers to build on pupils' ideas immediately.

35. Pupils learning English have full access to the curriculum and also receive good additional support in class. The school's planned approach to extending provision has been to strengthen class teachers' and the support staff's skills so that they cater for pupils' needs within class lessons. This is effective because teachers are aware of good practice in this regard and teaching assistants have received good training. This is also very effective for those pupils who are new to learning English. Setting arrangements in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 generally help ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils at different stages of learning. Nevertheless, although the staff who teach the lower English set work hard in the interests of their pupils, the work set for pupils is sometimes too challenging for them.
36. The school has made some good adaptations to its overall curriculum in order to better reflect pupils' diverse backgrounds and linguistic needs. Pupils and their families value this and it is supportive in allowing pupils to feel secure and to achieve to the best of their ability.
37. Provision for special educational needs is good. Each pupil has an individual education plan which is reviewed regularly. Pupils with special needs are given the support required and make good progress both academically and personally. Adaptations to teaching programmes are generally effective in meeting the varying needs of identified pupils. Grouping arrangements for mathematics ensure that pupils with special needs make good progress and achieve well.
38. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. Work is appropriately matched to their abilities in English and mathematics. Currently there are no specific activities aimed at this group of pupils, but initiatives enjoyed last year are planned again. In addition, advantage is taken of local sporting and arts events to provide stimulating activities for pupils talented in these areas.
39. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The buildings are old and some parts have not been maintained well in the past. The two halls and the sports arena are used satisfactorily throughout the week. The environmental area supports learning in science. The use of the computer suite is inefficient in that there is a clash between the timetable and the specialist teaching programme. There is no library where pupils can practise their research skills, although they do occasionally use the local public library. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is cramped and restrictive. There are a number of small areas useful for teaching pupils with special needs. Display is used well to focus on key vocabulary in most subjects. Every class has the benefit of an interactive whiteboard which is used well by teachers to support learning. However, there are no computers in classrooms to enable pupils to practise skills in other lessons and this contributes to low attainment achieved in information and communication technology.

## Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring the care, welfare and safety of pupils are very good. Support and guidance for pupils are good. Pupils' views are actively sought and they are given very good opportunities to be involved in all areas of school life.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school's very effective systems and practice ensure that pupils work and play in a safe environment.
- Nearly all pupils say that they have a high degree of trust in adults in the school.
- Pupils play an important role in the life of the school and make good contributions to school development.
- There are very good induction procedures, especially for those pupils who join the school other than at the normal times.

### Commentary

40. The care, support and involvement of pupils that the school provides have significantly improved since the last inspection. The school places a very high priority on fostering good relationships based on mutual respect, care and nurturing and to this end, the effective procedures, policies and practice in place ensure that the school very successfully meets these aims.
41. Risk assessments are regularly carried out across the whole school environment and for classroom and other activities. Attention to pupils' medical and first-aid needs is very effective and levels of supervision and support throughout the school day are very good. Good attention is given to child-protection issues and this is underpinned with effective staff training and the involvement of a member of the governing body appointed to monitor the implementation of policies and practice.
42. The school has very successfully gained the respect and trust of pupils. The results of the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire show that almost all pupils (92%) feel confident enough to approach at least one adult if they are worried.
43. The school council is the main forum for seeking pupils' views and for making decisions about issues affecting them. The elected members show very good levels of maturity, take their responsibilities seriously and play a very important role in helping to establish a positive learning environment both in terms of the school ethos and in improvements to school amenities and resources. Apart from the school council, pupils are also given many other opportunities to influence areas of school life, for example in setting classroom or whole-school rules, agreeing personal targets and sharing the overall aims of the school.
44. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are fully included and are happy and valued members of the school community. This is because the school has a very positive attitude towards diversity and values the contribution they make to its life.
45. Although the majority of pupils move into the school from the on-site nursery, a significant number, of all ages, join at other times throughout the school year. Through well-established and effective induction procedures, the school manages this situation very well. These measures ensure that new pupils quickly settle in, are happy and are able to quickly benefit from the educational opportunities provided.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

LINKS WITH PARENTS AND CARERS ARE GOOD. LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND THE COMMUNITY ARE ALSO GOOD.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Almost all parents express very positive views about most aspects of the school's work.
- The information supplied to parents about the school and pupils' progress is very good.
- Consultation with parents is very good.
- The good range of activities and initiatives with other schools and the community make a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development.

### **COMMENTARY**

46. The views expressed by parents during the pre-inspection meeting and those provided through a survey carried out by the school in the summer revealed a high degree of support and praise for the school. Parents particularly value the quality of teaching and the expectations staff have of pupils' work and personal development. These positive views are fully endorsed by the inspection team. The inspection team found, following observations and discussions with pupils, that there have been recent considerable improvements in standards of behaviour.
47. The school makes great efforts to forge closer links with the parents. There is a great awareness of the differing needs created by the wide range of languages and backgrounds of parents, and the school has put in place some very effective and innovative initiatives to create even closer links. The recently established parent-teacher association (PTA), for example, has quickly started to act as the main forum for consultation with parents. The quality of information included in pupil progress reports is very good and gives parents a good idea about standards, progress and what has been taught.
48. This is an outward-looking school that works closely with other schools and the community. There are very effective transition arrangements with two local secondary schools, including joint work on a transition project by Years 6 and 7. Other effective links with secondary schools involve sharing resources and enhancing teaching in various areas, including sports co-ordinators and curriculum enhancement for design and technology for Year 5. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities in the community. These include various sporting competitions, singing and other performances. A very good example involved pupils from Years 5 and 6 working with Network Rail on the redevelopment of the local station. As a result, the group have been awarded a substantial grant for their work.
49. The school has made very significant improvements in its partnership with parents, which was deemed unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and was identified as a key issue for improvement. Overall, parents make a reasonable contribution to pupil development both through support at home and by helping the school in various ways. The school values the contributions they make, especially in view of their backgrounds and experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. Key staff, in partnership with the senior management team, are good. Governance of the school is good. These are all major factors in overcoming the barriers to achievement and in improving standards.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is excellent leadership by the headteacher.
- There are very clear lines of communication between all parties involved in the school.
- The governance of the school is good.
- There is very good management that represents a school with high expectations.

## Commentary

50. The leadership, management and governance of the school have improved a great deal since the previous inspection in 1999 and have continued to improve since the inspection by HMI in 2002. The school faces several challenges to raising achievement, such as high levels of mobility, increasing numbers of refugees, and increasing numbers of children learning English as an additional language. The headteacher was appointed in November 2001 in a new initiative known as a 'federation', which meant that he was in charge of both Tidemill and the school where he was already the substantive head. Despite running two schools, he immediately established a very clear educational direction for the school that focused on raising children's achievements and standards of attainment. A school development plan was written, containing sharp targets for improvement that could be monitored easily by senior staff and governors. Following many staff changes and the headteacher's permanent appointment in 2003, key staff were appointed and a new and effective senior management team was established to drive developments forward positively and quickly. This established very clear lines of communication. Staff confidence and self-esteem were enhanced when teachers were allocated responsibilities and allowed to do the job they had been given. Review and school self-evaluation meetings were regularly held to assess progress and agree the next steps. Teaching and learning, especially in English, mathematics and science, were monitored closely. Examples of good practice were and still are shared with other staff.
51. Strong emphasis was placed on effective assessment systems to track children's progress, developing a broad and more stimulating curriculum. This has inspired pupils so that they want to come to school and learn. The headteacher is active in searching out and finding additional funds for the school to bring about such improvements.
52. There is a very clear view among all the staff and governors of the need to ensure that children achieve as well as they can. They share the high aspirations of the headteacher. The school development plan reflects the school's ambitions for its pupils and how it is exploring ways to make school even better for them. The school is fully inclusive. Data is analysed thoroughly to ensure that all pupils are making the progress they should and that there is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls, or between different ethnic groups. In addition, the headteacher looks closely at the value-added data available to the school about children's achievements between the infants and the juniors. These are very good and in the top five per cent for all schools nationally.
53. There are very good procedures for self-evaluation, performance management and staff development that help to identify and bring about further improvements. These too are linked to the school's priorities. All senior managers have attended leadership courses to give them high-level skills that they apply each day, encouraging pupils to do their best. Expertise within the school is used fully and staff responsibilities are allocated accordingly so that teachers teach their specialist or interest subjects to pupils in their own and other classes. Other skills in music and sport are brought into the school by experts. Pupils find success in subjects other than English and mathematics and this raises their self-esteem, giving them a more positive attitude to subjects they find difficult. As a result they achieve more.

54. The recently appointed inclusion manager has responsibility for Ethnic Minority Achievement and the provision for pupils learning English. She has received good external training and advice to help her make the necessary improvements and strengthen the provision. Her strong commitment to inclusion and her very good knowledge of best practice in the teaching of English have helped her to make improvements already.
55. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and is well organised, knowledgeable and committed to supporting pupils with special educational needs. She ensures that they receive expert advice and support from a range of specialist agencies. However, there has been delay in receiving support from the borough for pupils with special educational needs apart from those with speech and language difficulties. She is well supported by the locum co-ordinator, who ensured that there was no loss of provision when staff left. New systems have been put in place but have not yet had a full impact on pupil progress. The co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils provides good leadership and is committed to providing stimulating additional activities. Both co-ordinators place an appropriate emphasis on tracking pupil progress to ensure that provision is effective.
56. A knowledgeable governing body support the school very well. Together with the headteacher and senior management team, it contributes to the vision and direction of the school. Governors have a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses, and make decisions on an informed basis, visiting the school, following up links with classes, analysing data and monitoring finances. This supports the good quality of education which the children receive.
57. The governors and headteacher ensure that the budget reflects the school's educational priorities. Good financial procedures are in place and there is careful monitoring of the financial position during the year. There is a small deficit budget which has been carried forward. Whilst expenditure per pupil is high, this takes account of extra money which the school received in relation to the federation which was formed. The principles of best value are applied fully to all aspects of the school. This has resulted in high standards of achievement, an improving and stimulating curriculum, good teaching and high-quality leadership. The school provides good value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,059,332.30	Balance from previous year	88,361
Total expenditure	1,151,149.40	Balance carried forward to the next year	-2,766
Expenditure per pupil	4,185		

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Children enter the nursery when they are three. Provision in the nursery and the reception class is very good. This is because teaching and learning promote high levels of achievement in very young children in all of the areas of learning. Accommodation and resources, although cramped and not ideal for an Early Years curriculum, are used well by staff to help children to become independent. The small outside area is used effectively. Children are encouraged to make important choices about their work and learn through a wide variety of challenging and interesting play activities. Attainment on entry to the school is very low, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language, literacy and numeracy.

Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the Foundation Stage in all the areas of learning, with some very good teaching seen in some lessons. As a result, many children make rapid progress and achieve really well.

### **COMMON FEATURES OF THE HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING INCLUDE:**

- excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the ways in which children of this age learn.
- planning for exciting activities at different levels of the Stepping Stones<sup>1</sup> or early stages of the National Curriculum that engage children, encouraging them to talk and learn a lot;
- effective teaching methods, use of resources and deployment of adult support so that children achieve as well as they can;
- the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding, especially their capacity to work on their own or with others;
- thorough assessment of what children know and can do so that activities are planned to meet individual needs; and
- the children's very good attitudes and enthusiasm for learning.

LEADERSHIP OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE IS VERY GOOD. ALL THE STAFF IN THE NURSERY AND RECEPTION CLASS WORK VERY CLOSELY TOGETHER, REGULARLY EVALUATING THEIR WORK TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS. THE CURRICULUM TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE MANY DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH CHILDREN LEARN. IT IS VERY PRACTICAL AND RELEVANT TO CHILDREN OF THIS AGE. THIS ALLOWS THEM ALL, INCLUDING THOSE WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND THE HIGHER-ATTAINING CHILDREN, TO ACHIEVE AS WELL AS THEY CAN. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.

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<sup>1</sup> Stepping Stones: development stages in children's learning towards the Early Learning Goals.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The nursery children exhibit curiosity and are eager for new experiences.
- The development of independence skills is very good.
- Reception children are confident to try new activities and talk in groups.
- All children form good relationships with adults and their classmates, working together harmoniously.

## Commentary

58. Children achieve well because staff have set up a range of interesting activities, such as wet and dry sand, train tracks, play dough, art and craft activities, Santa's Grotto, and opportunities to experiment with ice in the "Small World" area. They have set them up in and out of the classroom, giving children new experiences as they move freely from one activity to another.
59. Staff are very good role models for the children in their discussions with them, inviting them to play together or spend time on activities on their own. Routines have been quickly established and are known well by all the children.
60. Reception and nursery children are rapidly growing in confidence and work happily on a task on their own or together, leaving the teacher free to work with a particular focus group. For example, children painted pictures and were engrossed in their chosen activity for a long time. They took the initiative to mix colours and explore the medium to get the best results. When decorating Christmas cakes which they had made, nursery children took great care to get their ideas 'just so'! In reception, children became completely absorbed in their role play in Santa's Grotto and showed very advanced social skills in the way that they planned together. Staff in both nursery and reception value and praise the children's efforts.
61. In all the lessons observed in the nursery and reception classes children worked together harmoniously, helping each other, sharing their ideas or playing happily together in Santa's Grotto. They shared books and talked to their teachers animatedly about their work.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills so that they communicate very effectively.
- Children are encouraged to try out their knowledge in writing at a very early stage.
- The classroom displays good use of ICT and good support from teaching assistants help children to recognise sounds and words so that they learn to read quickly.

## Commentary

62. In the nursery and reception classes, speaking and listening skills are developed very well through activities such as role-play in the home corner and the post office outside or as visitors visiting Santa's Grotto. Adults play alongside the children to extend their vocabulary and model conversations and discussions. A very good example was seen in the nursery, where the teacher focused on the development of children's vocabulary when playing with them in the make-believe world of the frozen Arctic. Adults use the correct vocabulary; this helps all children to communicate very effectively and confidently, especially those with English as an additional language.

63. Staff encourage the children to try and write things for themselves at a very early stage so that they understand that writing is an important way to communicate.
64. Children love learning to read. Stories from a range of cultures, as well as traditional Western European stories that are familiar to the children, are used to make them interested in the printed word. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to browse through books and tell each other stories from the pictures. Staff share imaginative stories with them and they also listen to taped stories, following them in books and on the interactive white board in reception. Children soon learn about the sounds letters make and use them to try and read new words; for example, a child new to learning English sounds out the letter 'p' when trying to read the word 'put'.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are many practical activities that help children to enjoy learning.
- Songs related to counting are encouraged daily and support children's learning of numbers.

### **Commentary**

65. Children in the nursery really enjoy singing songs and rhymes related to numbers. In the reception classes, staff build on this and continue introducing different number rhymes such as 'Melting Snowmen'. Children learn to sequence numbers and use words such as "*more*", "*less*", "*add*" and "*subtract*" in a fun way. Children in reception recognise two-dimensional shapes and are starting to learn about three-dimensional shapes. Games, role-play and formal recording of simple sums do much to help the children achieve as well as they can.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide good opportunities for children to learn from first-hand experience.
- The stimulating environment promotes pupils' interest and curiosity.
- There are many opportunities for building and creating things.
- There is good use of information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

66. In the nursery, children enjoy many experiences that help them to find out about the world around them, for example digging for worms, cooking, making and icing Christmas cakes, learning about the properties of ice and watching it melt. They design and make models from boxes and all kinds of recyclable materials. They also evaluate their designs. Children are currently learning about Christmas as part of a

detailed programme to help them develop a very good understanding of different faiths and cultures.

67. There is very good use of interactive whiteboards in reception, and in the nursery children show real confidence as they find programs and move the mouse correctly when using the computers.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planned curriculum promotes good achievement.
- Children have access to a range of activities that help them develop fine hand movements and co-ordination.
- Outside play areas are used well to develop physical skills.

### **Commentary**

68. Most children are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. The curriculum in the nursery and reception class gives children the chance to develop their dexterity by moulding shapes in malleable materials, rolling out and shaping pastry, dough or clay, and writing and constructing models from a wide range of materials and toys. They handle tools such as scissors and other objects with increasing control. Outside, children ride tricycles, climb, slide and play with hoops. Many move with confidence and imagination, and in safety.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the nursery and reception classes are encouraged to use their initiative to enable them to achieve well.
- Most children are on target to meet the early learning goals by the end of reception.

### **Commentary**

69. EXAMPLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF PAINTINGS, CLAY WORK, PAPER SCULPTURE, COLLAGE AND PAPER WEAVING SHOW THAT MANY CHILDREN EXPRESS AND COMMUNICATE THEIR IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS CONFIDENTLY THROUGH THEIR ART WORK AND IN DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY. ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING DRESSING UP AS DIFFERENT CHARACTERS AND TAKING ON DIFFERENT ROLES, PROMOTE REAL ACHIEVEMENT IN THE USE OF IMAGINATION AND THE COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS. IN THIS AREA CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUALITY SHINES.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

English provision is **good**.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Pupils are taught well, work very hard and achieve well as a result.
- Assessment in reading and writing is very good, but systems for formally assessing pupils' speaking skills are not yet in place, nor are pupils always involved in assessing their own progress and success.
- Teachers make good use of lessons in other subjects to support the development of pupils' English skills.

#### **COMMENTARY**

70. The previous subject leader led and managed the subject very well and the newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear view of what else needs to be done to continue to improve provision. Good support for staff and regular and effective monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' work have helped strengthen the provision.
71. Standards continue to improve, despite high pupil mobility and the large number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. Although standards remain below national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven, all pupils achieve well, given their low attainment on entry to school. This is because teachers work hard to ensure that specific vocabulary is taught and they, along with the teaching assistants, ensure that pupils understand and can clearly follow what is being taught. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of English within the school so that the high percentage of pupils who are new to learning English are given a good foundation for their future learning. Pupils appreciate this and work hard, enabling them to achieve very well. There are no significant differences between the achievement of pupils of different capabilities, between boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Those recently arrived at school - 'new arrivals' - are given very good support to enable them to access the curriculum as quickly as possible. The care and support which they receive is a significant factor in the high achievement which they make and a reason why they make rapid progress.
72. Standards in reading are close to national expectations and have improved considerably since the last inspection, when weaknesses were identified. By the time they are in Year 2, most pupils have a fairly good range of reading strategies. Many read fairly fluently by the time they are in Year 6. They talk confidently about the books they have read, the types of books they like and the authors they prefer. Reading is taught very well. Pupils whose reading skills lag behind those of others are also given a lot of extra support by staff, parents and volunteers. The school has a good supply of well-chosen guided reading books. It also has some other class readers which pupils can choose from and take home. However, the number, range and quality of these are fairly limited, which is made worse by the fact that there is no school library from which pupils can borrow books.

73. Pupils listen well, but standards in speaking are below national expectations because a significant minority of pupils are restricted by a limited vocabulary. This is true for both those who are learning English as an additional language and also for those who are native to speaking English and who have limited opportunities to develop their spoken language. Pupils nevertheless increasingly develop the confidence to speak out in lessons due to good use of questioning by staff. In informal situations they are more confident about speaking with one another, to adults and to visitors. The current whole-school focus on developing pupils' speaking skills as part of lessons across all subjects is proving very effective and allows them to achieve well, although the school has yet to develop a system of formally assessing pupils' attainment and progress in speaking.
74. Standards in writing are below national expectations. The work of higher-attaining pupils is fairly accurate and meets nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. There is clear evidence of higher attainment among a few pupils across Years 1 to 6. A scrutiny of pupils' work clearly shows that they make good progress and have good ideas for writing. Writing is taught well. Teachers introduce pupils to a good range of texts and pupils then use the ideas gained to add interest and detail to their own work. Teachers use a small-step approach to teaching pupils how to plan, develop, craft and redraft their work, and provide good displays of word banks and points of grammar to help pupils to write independently. The standard of presentation and handwriting is good throughout the school. Handwriting in almost all pupils' books is neat, well formed and easy to read. This reflects their very good attitudes to their work in English.
75. Assessment in reading and writing is very good, but systems for formally assessing pupils' speaking skills are not yet in place. Pupils' work is marked regularly and sometimes very well, showing where they need to improve. Periodically, pupils have focused lessons on redrafting their work and are set clear targets. On a day-to-day basis, pupils are not regularly involved in correcting their mistakes and responding to the teachers' marking nor are they involved enough in assessing their own progress and successes.
76. The school has made some adaptations of the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of its pupils, including choosing texts that reflect their interests and backgrounds, giving more time to extended writing and making good use of opportunities to develop English skills across subjects. This allows pupils to feel fully included and reflects and values the diversity of their backgrounds. The use of ICT to support pupils' work in English is, however, unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to use computers, and their word-processing skills are weak.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

77. PUPILS HAVE GOOD OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP SPEAKING, LISTENING, READING AND WRITING SKILLS AS PART OF THEIR WORK ACROSS ALMOST ALL SUBJECTS. THIS ALLOWS THEM TO ACHIEVE WELL AS THEY ARE ABLE TO USE THEIR SKILLS LEARNT IN ENGLISH IN OTHER SUBJECTS AND IT IS STARTING TO HAVE A MORE POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE RAISING OF STANDARDS.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is very good. In both infant and junior classes, this is leading to improved standards.
- Teachers have very good skills in teaching all aspects of mathematics, resulting in more focused lessons and high achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good, ensuring that the subject has a high profile in school.
- Numeracy skills are being used as well across the curriculum, helping to consolidate skills.
- The school's use of interactive white boards to support learning is effective and is raising standards.
- The school's approach to mental work is promoting and encouraging mental agility and improving pupils' identification of strategies to respond to problem solving.

## **Commentary**

78. The national comparative data for similar schools for the 2004 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that standards in mathematics were well above the national average for pupils achieving Level 2 and above average for pupils achieving Level 3. Against national averages for all schools standards are below at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence shows current standards to be in line with national averages. For pupils at the end of Year 6, standards dipped from the previous year but were slightly above the national average. The work seen during the inspection indicates that achievement is very good overall. This is linked to the very good teaching, very positive leadership, and improved resources and thorough planning, resulting in very positive attitudes among the pupils and an enthusiasm to learn. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are achieving well.
79. All groups of pupils achieve very well because they enjoy the subject. Introductions are lively and informative, and the effective use of the interactive white board provides a visual approach to learning. This provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. These pupils also receive very good levels of support both within the class and in withdrawal sessions. Relationships are excellent, promoting confidence, self-esteem, perseverance and an enthusiasm to learn. Difficulties are quickly overcome by patient and often repeated explanations so that pupils are able, during plenary sessions, to explain confidently to their peers what they did and how they did it. Teachers and support staff have high expectations which pupils understand and respond to in behaviour, endeavour and work output. In Years 1 and 2, where pupils were learning to read time on an analogue clock, in Year 3, where they were recognising unit fractions, or in Year 6, where they were recognising and extending number sequences, pupils were encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and record not only their answers but often how they were arrived at.
80. Teachers across the school have very good skills in mathematics. Lessons are very thoroughly planned, leading to very well managed learning. Teaching overall is very good and this is translated into very good achievement. In lessons observed, all teachers asked focused questions in order to extend pupils' mental and oral abilities.

This was seen in Year 6, where pupils were extending number sequences. Tasks designed by teachers are purposeful and encourage pupils to think about what they have learnt from them and how to improve their work. Lessons include high levels of interaction and demonstration so that all pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Assessment of pupils' achievement is very good. Information is gained from day-to-day assessment, an analysis of data from tests, and the school's review procedures. This in turn advises future teaching and planning, and is used effectively for pupils of all abilities to make good gains in their learning. The marking of pupils' work is regular and offers comments on standards. It does not, however, provide guidance on how pupils may improve.

81. Leadership in mathematics is very good and is having a positive impact on provision and standards. The co-ordinator is committed and experienced and has a very clear overview of the provision. She regularly monitors the planning, teaching, learning and standards to ensure a more manageable, regular, secure and meaningful system. She ensures that the subject has a very high profile in the school and this helps to secure continued improvement. Standards achieved are now securely in line with national averages and indicates a major improvement since the previous inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are in line with expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.
- There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good, with a strong focus on developing pupils' investigative skills.
- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils in infant classes.
- Strategies to help pupils find things out themselves are not well enough developed.
- Leadership is good.
- Marking and assessment are areas to develop.
- ICT is not used enough to help pupils learn.

### **Commentary**

82. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2004, standards were below national averages but above the average when a comparison is made with schools that are similar. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were in line with national averages. This represents a very significant improvement since the previous year, when standards at the end of Year 2 were very low. Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. However, standards of experimental science are a relative weakness within the subject. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below expectations.
83. Pupils' achievement is good across the school. This is because of the good teaching with a strong focus on scientific vocabulary and enquiry skills, which help pupils develop a sound understanding of science. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support from teacher assistants and achieve well overall.



84. Pupils in Year 2 make sensible predictions about the effect of blowing on a sailing boat. More able pupils complete more independent written work than others.
85. Pupils in Year 6 identify electrical components from symbols and can apply this knowledge to drawings and practical circuits. More able pupils successfully construct a parallel circuit and explain the effects on bulbs and motors. Pupils understand the need for a fair test and most can confidently identify what needs to change or stay the same. Pupils lack familiarity with some equipment because improvements to the curriculum and the availability of resources have not yet had a full impact. There is evidence of more secure practical skills in Years 3 and 4.
86. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Planning identifies clear learning objectives and key vocabulary which in turn support pupils' learning. Practical and written work is beginning to be adapted to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, but there are inconsistencies. For example, in some lessons, practical work is insufficiently challenging for more able pupils, and some junior pupils have insufficient opportunities to select and prepare resources. Teachers use assistants well to support less able pupils in all parts of the lesson. They place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' use of correct vocabulary and investigative skills. Teachers use very good questioning to enable pupils to clarify their understanding. They use resources well, particularly the interactive whiteboards, which help pupils focus. However, whiteboards are not sufficiently used by pupils to demonstrate their understanding.
87. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers assess pupils against key objectives at the end of each unit of work. These assessments have yet to be related to National Curriculum levels, except at the end of Years 2 and 6. There is insufficient analysis of performance to track the progress of pupils or groups throughout their time in the school. Marking does not give pupils sufficient information to enable them to improve their work nor are they able to be involved enough in their own analysis of how well they are doing.
88. The curriculum secures a balance between the different aspects of science and allows for mixed-age classes. There are insufficient opportunities for graphical work to support mathematics. The use of the environmental area supports work in natural science. Whilst resources are satisfactory overall, there are some shortages which limit pupils' access to practical work. The use of specialist teachers in the juniors secures good teaching, but there are shortcomings. It restricts the timetable and lacks flexibility, and teachers are less aware of pupils' skills.
89. Leadership is good and management is sound. The new co-ordinator has successfully conducted an initial review of pupils' work books and implemented appropriate strategies for the improvement of provision. These have yet to be implemented consistently or have a full impact on standards, in particular raising the achievement of the less able pupils. The co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to observe teaching and obtain an overview of standards across the school, including strengths and weaknesses. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. There have been significant improvements in standards, the curriculum and leadership.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are below national expectations throughout the school because pupils have too few opportunities to practise and apply their ICT skills.
- Resources and staff expertise have improved considerably since the last inspection although they are only recently in place.
- After-school clubs in the subject are well attended.
- The co-ordinator has a clear idea of what needs to be done, but raising pupils' standards in ICT lacks a sharp enough focus in the school.

## **COMMENTARY**

90. Evidence from lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' past work and teacher assessments shows that pupils' attainment is below national expectations. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Standards although improving, have not improved as quickly as in other subjects and pupils do not make the progress they should in ICT. This is because, although pupils have set lessons in the ICT suite in which they are taught the appropriate skills, they have too few other opportunities to practise and extend these skills at other times. Nevertheless, in lessons seen, many pupils need additional support to complete tasks, and their keyboards skills are slow. This is because they have until recently had insufficient opportunities to learn and practise what they have learnt.
91. The considerable investment in interactive whiteboards and staff training since the last inspection has led to much improved staff confidence. This means that in all classes teachers are using the interactive whiteboards well to enhance their teaching. However, this does not enable pupils to extend their skills, nor has it resulted in all teachers feeling sufficiently confident to teach ICT to their own class in the ICT suite. The ICT suite is not used often enough to support pupils' learning across most subjects, although a few teachers sometimes use it to teach a mathematics or English lesson. The small number of computers in classrooms are underused.
92. No direct teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. Three lessons were seen across Years 3 to 6, all taught by the subject coordinator or the deputy headteacher. The deployment of the deputy headteacher to teach ICT skills lessons to pupils in Years 4 to 6 ensures that they are taught the basic skills but this means that other staff do not teach their own class in the ICT suite. The quality of this teaching was good overall. Both staff have good skills in teaching and in using ICT. They explain tasks clearly and they use the interactive whiteboard well to ensure that all pupils understand what they need to do. Assessment in ICT is limited. Furthermore, because many teachers do not teach basic skills lessons to their own classes, they have insufficient knowledge about exactly what their pupils can and cannot do.
93. There are strengths in the leadership and management. For example, under the leadership of both the deputy headteacher and the current co-ordinator, teachers and the support staff have received a good deal of necessary high-quality additional training. As a result, teachers have developed confidence and good skills in using the interactive whiteboards. After-school clubs are well attended by around 50 pupils. Weaknesses in leadership relate to the fact that class teachers are 'invited' to use the ICT suite rather than receiving a clear message that pupils should be using it. There

are strengths and weaknesses in resources. The fact that every classroom has an interactive whiteboard is clearly a strength. The ICT suite is well equipped, but space is limited and the room is dark and dingy. There are few computers in classrooms for pupils to use as part of their day-to-day work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

94. LINKS BETWEEN ICT AND OTHER SUBJECTS ARE UNSATISFACTORY. PUPILS HAVE A FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO USE ICT TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK IN ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS. LINKS BETWEEN ICT AND PUPILS' WORK IN OTHER SUBJECTS ARE LIMITED.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically and achieve well. Consequently, standards are above those expected by the age of eleven.
- Artefacts are used well to promote learning but there was no evidence of ICT being used to research information.
- There are no formal checks on teaching, learning and standards. This is an area requiring improvement.

### **Commentary**

95. In the lessons observed, pupils achieved well and standards by age eleven are above those normally expected. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In discussion with pupils in class and in a scrutiny of work, pupils show a good understanding of different events, characters, chronology, cause and effect. Pupils worked collaboratively and the tasks generated not only excitement in their learning, but also developed skills of enquiry. There is no evidence of pupils using ICT to research information about the aspects being taught, thus limiting individual pupil learning.
96. Pupils are very enthusiastic about history. Those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are fully involved and encouraged and supported by their peers to offer views when working collaboratively.
97. Teaching is good overall. They plan lively, stimulating work which creates excitement and anticipation in lessons. Planning is thorough and the teaching and handling of artefacts, together with a good learning environment and very good relationships, impacts positively on raising standards. This firm emphasis on providing pupils with as much direct experience as possible assists directly in overcoming such barriers to learning as high mobility and pupils having English as an additional language. Good use is made of timelines.

98. Leadership and management are secure. History is well organised in blocks of time and teachers are provided with good resources to support their teaching and reinforce the effective use of their good subject knowledge. There is a lack of systematic assessment of pupils' progress. Marking, although consistent, does not provide guidance on how pupils may improve their learning by involving them more in assessing their own learning. Presentation of work is at least satisfactory and indicates the positive attitudes pupils have towards this subject.

## **Geography**

99. GEOGRAPHY WAS NOT A FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION AND CONSEQUENTLY NO JUDGEMENT IS BEING MADE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF PROVISION. HOWEVER, A SCRUTINY OF PUPILS' WORK AVAILABLE AND CURRICULUM PLANS SUGGESTS THAT A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES IS IN PLACE AND THE SUBJECT CONTRIBUTES WELL TO PUPILS' GEOGRAPHICAL AWARENESS WHEN CONSIDERING THEIR OWN LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPING THEIR MAPPING SKILLS. THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE WOULD SUGGEST THAT STANDARDS ARE SATISFACTORY.

## **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well overall and develop a satisfactory understanding of religious themes for their ages.
- Attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are variable but work in pupils' books indicates that teaching is good overall.
- Resources and artefacts are satisfactory.

## **Commentary**

100. Timetable restrictions meant that only one religious education lesson could be seen. However, judgements have been made on the basis of other evidence. In the lesson seen, Year 2 pupils share their understanding of events leading up to Christmas and are able to sequence them correctly to act out and write about the story. The good teaching provides good opportunities for speaking and listening, as well as writing, without losing the impact of the religious education content.
101. Work in pupils' books indicates that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6. Year 2 pupils have opportunities to write independently about their understanding of Hindu gods, and about the importance of Zakat, in their study of Islam. There are planned opportunities for pupils to learn about and from religions. In their work about Christmas, pupils identify Jesus as the 'Light of the World' and identify how they could make the world a better place.
102. In Year 6, pupils study key facts about Hinduism and Judaism. They have written about the birth of Ganesha in a variety of ways and chosen different animals to

represent their own personalities, giving generally appropriate reasons for their choices. They have written about the Torah and made their own prayer scroll. However, opportunities for independent writing are limited and recording often focuses on copying facts.

103. Work in pupils' books indicates that teaching is good overall. It is good when work is interesting and planned to take account of pupils' abilities, and pupils have opportunities to express their understanding through independent written tasks. The school makes good use of the borough loan system to supplement resources as the numbers of books and artefacts for pupil use are limited to deliver the curriculum.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standard of work overall is now satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Programmes of work include varied and interesting activities that successfully reflect links with other subjects and with the diversity of pupils' backgrounds.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good and they behave well in lessons.

#### **Commentary**

104. Only one lesson was seen during the period of the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to give an overall judgement about teaching. Other evidence was provided by a scrutiny of children's past work, including displays around the school. This shows that standards by the ages of seven and eleven have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with what is expected nationally. The school has worked hard recently to improve the range of activities in lessons, and the use of a specialist teacher for the teaching of art and design in the juniors has been beneficial.
105. Pupils use a variety of materials and follow interesting tasks that include painting, observational drawing, collage and working in the style of other artists. Knowledge, skills and understanding are starting to be built up in a systematic way and, as a result, pupils' achievement over time is improving, including for those pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Programmes of work are linked to national guidance. There are good links with other subjects in the curriculum, and art and design supports and enhances subjects such as literacy and history.

### **Design and technology**

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

106. Design and technology was not a focus of the inspection. It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection in which teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good. The curriculum is now satisfactory, an improvement since the previous inspection. Children plan and design their work to a satisfactory level and

show a sense of achievement in their finished products. There are only limited opportunities for them to evaluate their work.

107. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good and they behave well. Displays of work around the school are of a satisfactory standard. A good standard of work was achieved by children new to the school in the making of African drums.

## **MUSIC**

108. Only two lessons were seen, so there is insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements on the overall provision, standards and achievement in music. Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that teaching is good and that pupils achieve well. They sing well in assemblies and the choir sang well during a carol concert rehearsal. In the two lessons seen, teaching and learning were good or very good. Lessons had a very clear focus and were both challenging and enjoyable. Teachers had good subject knowledge. Pupils responded well to the interesting range of songs and music that they heard and which different cultures. The music provision is greatly enriched by the contribution of specialist teaching through the school's good links with Lewisham Music Service. This enables pupils to take part in musical performances, both in school and within the local community, and all pupils benefit from some specialist music teaching. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 can extend their skills by joining the choir or the Steel Pans group, or by learning to play a musical instrument.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is variable but good overall.
- Standards in athletics are above expectations by the age of eleven and a number of pupils reach above national standards by the age of seven.
- Specialist teaching has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, but there are shortcomings.
- The way in which units of work are organised limits the acquisition of skills.
- Standards in swimming are below expectations.

## **Commentary**

109. In Years 1 and 2 pupils demonstrate skills in line with national expectations in their dance based on emotions. All pupils have a good awareness of space and move easily around the hall. They show considerable control and adapt their movements well to accompanying music. They receive clear instructions on how to make their performance better and, as a result, achieve very well. Younger children show good control and co-ordination when hopping, running and balancing and they are encouraged by teachers to practise these skills, which in turn allow them to achieve well, although they find skipping more challenging.
110. Teaching is variable but good overall. Lessons are well balanced and good use is made of teacher assistants to support individual pupils. Vigorous warm ups are followed by focused teaching and demonstration of skills. As appropriate, the

interactive whiteboard is used effectively to demonstrate expectations of good techniques. When teaching is very good, the pace of learning is brisk and all pupils are fully engaged throughout the session. As a result of the good teaching, pupils develop their games skills well as they move through the school. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 show appropriate control of the ball during soccer skills practice. They pass and aim with reasonable accuracy, with some demonstrating skills above those expected. In Year 6, good subject knowledge by teachers enables pupils to develop sprinting and shot-put skills to standards above those expected nationally. However, standards in swimming are below those expected nationally, with a third of last year's Year 6 pupils unable to swim 25 metres.

111. A residential trip for Year 6 pupils provides a positive experience of outdoor and adventurous activities as well as supporting pupils' personal and social development. Games and other aspects are often taught by a specialist teacher or games coach, especially in the juniors. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching but does limit the time when facilities are used. A range of after-school clubs such as football, netball and gymnastics further enrich the curriculum offered and support pupils' good achievement. The school teams have enjoyed considerable success in local tournaments and are rightly proud of their achievements.
112. Leadership is good and management sound. The co-ordinator is very experienced and contributes to the specialist teaching programme. He has been successful in putting the curriculum planning framework in place and ensuring that there are sufficient good resources. Assessment is satisfactory. The school has made satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are in line with national expectations by Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Lessons provide good opportunities for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The scheme of work is not yet fully developed to support planning.

### **Commentary**

113. By Year 6, standards in personal, social and health education are in line with national expectations. Pupils understand what a stereotype is and are able to identify different stereotypes, using a range of advertisements to support their thinking. They use their own experience to discuss why such views are wrong, but find it more challenging to express how these views have a wider impact. Younger pupils in Year 3 discussed ways to make children feel included. They used a democratic process to identify inviting children to play as effective in preventing bullying. Teaching in the lessons seen was good. Teachers are well prepared and give pupils plenty of opportunity to discuss their ideas in pairs and small groups. They pose good questions to help pupils develop their thinking.

114. It is clear that pupils achieve well overall because their attitudes and behaviour are good. They are respectful of others, enjoy very good relationships with each other and adults, and have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The schools' high expectations of pupils' conduct and the promotion of racial harmony support these strengths. The school council and day-to-day responsibilities offered to pupils make a positive contribution. All teachers devote time to personal, social and health education and teach the themes identified in the curriculum planning framework.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

<b><i>Inspection judgement</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*