

INSPECTION REPORT

GEARIES INFANTS' SCHOOL

Gants Hill, Ilford

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 133934

Headteacher: Mr R Drew

Lead inspector: Ray Morris

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th November 2004

Inspection number: 271724

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 316

School address: Waremead Road
Gants Hill
Ilford
Essex
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Pettifer

Date of previous inspection: 1st February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Situated in the Gants Hill area of Ilford, the school is bigger than other primary schools with 316 pupils aged 3 to 7 in nine full-time and two part-time classes. The school serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are similar to those found nationally. Although the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with that for similar schools, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well-below average. Of these, nine pupils have statements that outline particular learning needs. The school has a very high percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language, representing fifteen different cultures, the two largest groups having an Asian British – Indian or Pakistani background. A significant number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English and twenty-three are also refugees. As a result, the overall level of pupils' attainment when they start school is below the national average. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2003 and has been awarded the national Gold Artsmark for the quality of its curriculum. It has received Healthy Schools recognition, and has Investors In People status which recognises that it has good systems to support and train its staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

OVERALL EVALUATION

Gearies Infants is a very good school that caters very well for all pupils, whatever their needs. Teaching throughout the school is very effective so that all pupils learn very well. The school's values of tolerance and respect permeate the curriculum and life of the school and are a significant factor in pupils' very good achievement. The school is very effectively led and managed and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils are very well cared for and thrive in a multicultural environment in which they all feel included and valued
- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children have a very positive start to school
- Although teaching is very effective overall it is not always of this high quality in all lessons
- There is very good provision for pupils with additional learning needs and for the very high proportion who are learning English as an additional language
- Very good support from governors and the staff team complements the headteacher's excellent sense of purpose and high aspirations
- Lack of outside learning facilities for Reception children is a barrier to even higher achievement

Matters identified for improvement in the last inspection have been very effectively dealt with. In particular, the school now plans carefully for pupils' personal and social development and this, combined with high expectations and clear rules, ensures very good behaviour. The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has resulted in very good provision, enabling pupils to achieve standards well above the average. Schemes of work now exist for all subjects and contribute to the significant gain in pupils' achievement, so that **improvement since the last inspection has been very good**. Very good leadership, especially that of the headteacher, and the very effective governing body provide a firm basis for continued improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

NB: The school was reorganised and became, technically, a new school in 2001. Results for 2002, therefore, were not published.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading		B	B	A
writing		A	A	A*
mathematics		B	B	B

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is very good. When children join the Nursery many have lower than expected standards, especially in communication skills, language and social development; this is due to the very high proportion of children learning English as an additional language. By the end of their Reception year, children have exceeded the goals they are expected to reach in personal and social development, language and communication, mathematical development and in children's creative skills. By the age of seven, standards overall are above average, and they are well above average in reading,

writing and ICT. A notable achievement is that in last year's national tests at age seven the great majority of pupils, including those with special learning needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieved or exceeded national expectations. When compared with similar schools, results for writing were in the top five per cent of schools across the country.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is very good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development, and those for their moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

Teaching and learning are very good and pupils make very good progress in most lessons. In the few lessons that are less effective it is because some tasks set for higher-attaining pupils do not challenge them sufficiently. Staff build very good relationships with pupils ensuring that lessons reinforce the school's values and promote pupils' personal development. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a very good contribution to teaching and learning. Together with teachers, they are adept at securing positive attitudes and behaviour so that all pupils, including those with special learning needs and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' progress in detail, using the information to plan effectively for the next steps in pupils' learning. The emphasis placed on teaching with carefully thought out additional practical activities underpins effective and enjoyable learning. Planning of work for pupils with significant additional learning needs is of a particularly high quality.

Very good use is made of the multicultural nature of the school and local community. As a result, the broad curriculum and a range of additional activities provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop healthy personal and social attitudes, and to experience a range of creative and cultural activities. Although outdoor facilities for the Reception classes are unsatisfactory, those in the Nursery are particularly well used.

Pupils are safe and well cared for, and receive very good guidance in their personal development. Arrangements for joining and leaving the school are very good and ensure pupils make a confident and effective start on the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's sense of purpose, combined with high aspirations, is excellent. He has created a staff team in which leadership at all levels is ambitious and effective, especially in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. The school's development is underpinned by very good management. Improvements are carefully planned, and the resulting impact on pupils' progress is rigorously assessed. The governing body is very effectively engaged in the school's improvement and ensures it complies fully with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents express positive views of the school and feel their children make good progress. A small minority have concerns about pupils' behaviour but inspectors judge that the school manages this very well. Pupils enjoy learning very much and are keen to come to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Ensure that the very good teaching which already exists is firmly established throughout the school
- Improve the outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception classes

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is very good. Standards are above average overall and well above average in reading, writing, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Main strengths

- Results in national tests in reading and mathematics are above average and they are well above average in writing
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those with special learning needs, make very good progress and most achieve at least average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2
- Higher ability pupils achieve very well in science and writing

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (17.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.0 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 86 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have risen steadily since the last inspection. In last year's tests, results were above average in reading and mathematics, and those in writing were well above average compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools (those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals) the school's results in reading were well above average, as were those in writing which were in the top five per cent nationally. A notable achievement is that the great majority of pupils, including those with special learning needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieved or exceeded the national expectations of Level 2 in all three subjects. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in writing, and in science (which is judged on teachers' own assessments), was also well above average.
2. When children join the Nursery their language and communication skills are lower than expected for their age; this is due to the very high proportion of children learning English as an additional language. In other areas of learning the children show similar skills to other three and four year olds. Excellent relationships in the Nursery and the extremely skilful way in which staff promote speaking and listening are significant factors in children's very good achievement, bringing their overall skills to the expected level for their age by the beginning of their Reception year.
3. Children's progress continues to be good and by the end of the Reception year standards are higher than expected in personal and social development, language and communication, and in children's creative skills. Overall, they have gained a good understanding of the world around them and are confident. Children do especially well in developing writing and counting skills. By the end of the Reception year, nine out of every ten children reach the expected goals for their age, with three out of ten often working beyond this. A few children work at a much higher level, which reflects the high quality provision for all abilities.
4. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mostly very effective and so pupils, including those who joined the school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, continue to

make very good progress. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are expected to be above average in most subjects by the end of Year 2, and well above average in reading, writing and ICT. As many pupils join the school with below-average skills in language, and others have significant learning needs, their achievement overall is very good.

5. The school carefully compares the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups, some of whom are refugees and only recently arrived in this country. Because of the numbers involved, variations in performance of different groups are not statistically significant, and the staff are aware that standard tests do not always take into account the cultural background of pupils. However, the school has detailed procedures for checking the progress of individuals. As a result, it ensures that teaching is effective so that the majority attain average or above average standards and that refugees are quickly assimilated.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths

- Children thrive in a multicultural environment in which all feel valued. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy coming to school
- Clearly defined and collectively agreed values, together with the whole-school approach to securing good behaviour, ensure that learning in lessons is very effective
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development, while those for their moral, social and cultural development are very good

Commentary

6. As a result of the school's efforts to achieve consistently high standards of classroom management, pupils' behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now very good. Teachers handle occasional examples of disruptive behaviour firmly and apply staged sanctions and rewards, so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils generally show a lively interest in lessons and move quickly and purposefully between activities. They enjoy coming to school and find homework fun.
7. Pupils feel confident about informing an adult of bullying and understand that any incidents, including racist behaviour, will be dealt with swiftly.
8. The school helps pupils to grow into responsible members of the school community. Older pupils enjoy volunteering to help at lunch and break times and those aspiring to become playground 'buddies' take their responsibilities very seriously. Having identified that they could do more to help Reception children enjoy play-time, school council members are being trained to become play leaders.
9. The school's collectively agreed values foster a calm, happy atmosphere for teaching and learning. These core values are reinforced at every opportunity, both in assemblies and throughout the school day. During the inspection, tolerance and respect formed the 'value of the month' and individual instances of pupils practising these values were noted by staff and warmly praised. The high quality of relationships has helped ensure the smooth assimilation of the recently arrived refugee children into the life of the school.
10. Attendance has remained satisfactory since the last inspection. The school takes good action to promote attendance. Its procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and

punctuality are rigorous, and any lapses are quickly investigated. This approach has been successful in reducing rates of unauthorised absence, particularly term-time holidays.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9%
National data	5.1%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5%
National data	0.4%

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

11. There were three fixed-term exclusions last year, involving one pupil.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
16	3	0
10	0	0
8	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
49	0	0
34	0	0
7	0	0
15	0	0
8	0	0
11	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0

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

12. Taken as a whole, there has been very good improvement in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and it is now very good. Pupils' spiritual development is good, and they are given opportunities for personal reflection. To support their moral development, pupils receive very good guidance on what is right and wrong. They thrive socially during their time at the school, cooperating in lessons and enjoying one another's company at play-times. Older pupils keep a watchful eye on the younger ones. The school offers a rich environment for pupils to exchange cultural experiences. Displays throughout the school celebrate different world religions and pupils value one another's traditions and beliefs.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good because very effective teaching, coupled with a stimulating curriculum and very good standards of care, lead to pupils making very good progress.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and their progress carefully checked.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently and very effectively used to reinforce the school's values and to promote pupils' personal development
- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a solid base for children's future learning
- Teachers assess pupils' progress in detail, using the information to plan effectively for the next steps in learning. Planning for the pupils with significant learning needs is exemplary
- Pupils with special learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language are very well supported in lessons by teaching assistants and so they make very good progress
- The best practice observed during the inspection has yet to be extended consistently to all classes

Commentary

13. There has been very good improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection and it is now very good overall. Teaching in the majority of lessons seen was very good and was excellent in one of them. Although always at least satisfactory, a proportion of lessons were not of the same high quality and so pupils' learning in these lessons was slower as a result.
14. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and especially strong in the Nursery, where aspects are excellent. Overall, learning is fun and very well planned, so that literacy, numeracy, creative and social skills are interwoven with each other in a natural and meaningful way. Children understand what they are doing and quickly acquire new skills. Teachers have a very good understanding of how children learn and so lessons are skilfully organised to use whole class teaching and small group activities to best effect. This allows children to enjoy investigating things for themselves, especially by looking, touching smelling and listening, which is very good practice. Teachers insist on excellent standards of behaviour and do this in a fun and positive way, so that valuable learning time is not lost. Good questioning by adults makes the children think and use more complex language, which aids their achievement in speaking. Links between language and mathematics are very strong. Children learn how to make decisions for themselves and solve simple problems. Teachers plan work to meet the needs of individuals and make very good use of assessment information to find out what higher, middle and lower ability children can do, and what they need to do next to make progress. Teaching assistants are very effectively involved in group activities and in collecting evidence to assess children's progress.
15. The school's values and pupils' personal development are fostered at every opportunity. An unexpected delay waiting for the hall to become free for a physical education (PE) lesson for example, provided an opportunity for an impromptu lesson on the importance of valuing what others do and thanking them for it. An unexpected present had been received by the class and pupils were encouraged to express their appreciation with a prompt call on a mobile phone to the senders. Teachers skilfully secure good behaviour in lessons with praise and constructive correction when pupils misbehave. For example, pupils are referred

to the class rule they have broken and emphasis placed on the expected behaviour rather than what the pupil was doing wrong.

16. The most effective teaching ensures pupils are clear about the purpose of the lesson. This is written in simple terms on the whiteboard so that pupils themselves can read it aloud with the teacher. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to discuss their work with an adult or each other, often done in 'whisper groups' to keep the level of noise manageable. Activities ensure a high degree of challenge. This was seen in an excellent PE lesson when the teacher's questions continually challenged pupils to evaluate and improve what they were doing so that high quality learning was sustained throughout the lesson. In the best lessons, the final few minutes are also used to check that pupils have learnt what they set out to and to link it to future learning. In a very good science lesson, for example, higher attaining pupils were challenged to use what they had learnt about simple electrical circuits to predict what would happen if an additional bulb were added to one. Where teaching was less effective, higher attaining pupils were often provided with individual activities which were not wholly centred on what was being learnt or which were not sufficiently challenging for them. For example, in a science lesson pupils used valuable time cutting out pictures of animals before sorting them, which was the main purpose of the activity, into nocturnal and daytime sets.
17. Teachers' procedures for checking pupils' progress are very well developed and used very effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT in particular is carefully checked against a list of what pupils need to achieve. The school is also alert to the relative progress made by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds so that everything is done to ensure they all achieve as well as they should. Individual learning plans for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. They set clear goals for pupils learning, describe in detail how these will be achieved and assessed, and are regularly reviewed. A notable feature is additional, similarly detailed, plans for ICT to be used to support the pupil's learning.
18. Teaching assistants form very good partnerships with class teachers and are clearly well briefed so that their work with pupils, especially those learning English as an additional language, helps them make very good progress. They maintain constant dialogue, checking pupils' understanding and helping them have a sense of pride in what they do. Consequently these pupils are confident in adding their contributions to class discussions and are fully included in lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	17 (52%)	7(21%)	8(24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum enriched by a very good range of additional activities and the multi-cultural nature of the school population. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities are provided for practical and creative activities
- Pupils with additional learning needs, and those for whom English is a second language, are fully included in lessons because teaching assistants are well trained and clearly directed by teachers

- The curriculum is carefully planned to help pupils develop literacy, mathematical and ICT skills in other subjects
- After-school clubs, outside visits and special themed weeks considerably enrich the curriculum
- Although the nursery has an excellent outside area to support children's learning, the reception classes do not have their own area and this is unsatisfactory

Commentary

19. The curriculum is very good. It meets statutory requirements and provides a range of stimulating activities relevant to pupils' needs. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' plans now follow national guidelines so there is progression in pupils' learning.
20. The curriculum is very well planned in the Foundation Stage. The accommodation is very good in the Nursery, where they have an excellent outside area to enrich the curriculum and learning opportunities. However, in the Reception classes, although they make suitable use of the school's playground and the Nursery garden, they do not have their own area, which is unsatisfactory because it limits spontaneous activities.

21. The school places strong emphasis on providing creative and practical activities. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, a group of lower ability pupils used brightly coloured pictures, labels and stickers to create sentences based on the book 'Owl Babies'. This book was also the stimulus for drama in a Year 1 class when pupils were given masks and worked collaboratively to act out their story using sounds and voices. Such activities have been a key factor in the pupils' high achievement in writing and parents express positive views about the emphasis the school places on learning through creativity and the arts.
22. Well planned activities and effective use of teaching assistants and additional teachers ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. As a result, pupils with special learning, those who are learning English as an additional language and those who are refugees participate fully in all activities, which are also adapted to suit the different ways in which pupils learn. A pupil with severe learning needs, for example, was helped to take part in a history lesson by the teaching assistant who used exaggerated facial expression and demonstrated actions herself so that the pupil fully understood what was required.
23. Pupils develop literacy, numeracy and computer skills effectively in other subjects. For example, lessons in Religious Education are planned so that learning in mathematics and ICT is consolidated when pupils design symmetrical Muslim prayer mats on the computer. Visits to museums, the seaside and a variety of places of worship provide very good opportunities for them to extend their knowledge and understanding, while whole weeks devoted to a particular theme, such as history or science, help to consolidate it. A creative element is added through work with artists and sculptors. Pupils have recently been working, for example, on a project involving the creation of a life-size sculpture which will stand outside the local tube station. After-school clubs include sporting, computer and musical activities and the great majority of parents appreciate the range of activities.
24. Although it is limited, good use is made of the school's accommodation and attractive displays reflect many aspects of the curriculum. Resources are good; a wide range of books and equipment for literacy and drama, for example, contributes very effectively to raising pupils' achievement in English. The school is well staffed with teaching assistants and teachers, some of whom are particularly well qualified and used by the Local Authority to help raise standards in other schools.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety very well. It is receptive and is good at taking pupils' views into account. Pupils benefit from very good support and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures throughout the school ensure pupils are safe and well cared for and pupils confirm they have a trusting relationship with an adult and feel safe and happy in school
- Pupils receive very effective guidance in their personal as well as academic development
- Arrangements for joining and leaving the school are very good and ensure pupils make a confident and effective start on the next stage of their education
- Although staff are receptive to pupils' views they do not yet consult them about pupils' own learning as well as they might

Commentary

25. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school now has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff throughout the school are regularly trained in child protection and, supported by governors, the headteacher is prepared to pursue determinedly with outside agencies any concerns staff might have

about children in their care. Staff are equally determined to ensure the smooth assimilation of refugee children. A balance is struck between offering a warm welcome to visitors and preventing unauthorised access.

26. The fabric of the buildings is carefully checked, with the caretaker and his team being especially alert to potential hazards. Pupils are reminded of safety issues in class, for example when lighting Diwali lamps. Mealtimes are orderly, very well supervised and offer healthy options. In the playground there are many opportunities for active or quiet play and well-trained midday supervisors monitor behaviour and ensure equipment is used safely. Pupils themselves are keen to keep the area clean and tidy and, at morning break, they relish the snack of fruit and vegetables provided for them. As a result of all these efforts, pupils feel very safe and are able to concentrate on learning.
27. Care for children in the Foundation Stage is central to the ethos of the very good provision and has a significant impact on their very good achievement. They are looked after and helped to feel that school is a secure and happy place so they develop very good behaviour. Systems are very well established to evaluate the children's progress and to ensure that children know how they can best make further progress.
28. This very good guidance continues as pupils progress through Years 1 and 2, not only on how to improve academically but also on their personal development. The progress of pupils learning English as an additional language, in particular is reviewed throughout the school year to establish realistic but challenging targets for improvement. These are determined after taking account of such issues as length of schooling, domestic circumstances and current proficiency in English. Reports to parents convey a clear picture of the whole child, celebrate strengths and achievements, and indicate areas for improvement. Teachers know their pupils well and support them in getting the most out of their time at the school. Induction arrangements are very good and pupils who were 'late joiners' report being helped to settle quickly into the school community so that their education continued uninterrupted. Pupils clearly enjoy very good relations with adults, and provide examples of being able to approach teachers and other staff with problems.
29. The school makes good efforts to involve pupils in decisions about school life. An impressive meeting of the school council, which has its own office holders and budget, took place during the inspection. Children as young as five were sensitively encouraged by a teacher to give their views on how the playground could be improved for Reception pupils. Another important aspect of the council's work is supporting the school in the drive to become even healthier. Other pupils report being able to contribute to classroom rules. Opportunities to influence how they learn are less well developed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are very good. Both parental involvement with, and support for, the school are very good. The school works very well with the local community, and links with the neighbouring Junior School and others in the area are very productive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school communicates clearly on every aspect of its work to build effective partnerships with parents, including those whose children are learning English as an additional language
- The school draws on the local and wider community to create exciting opportunities for reinforcing and extending the curriculum
- Very good links with other local schools help spread best practice in teaching and learning
- Close liaison with the Junior School ensures smooth transition for pupils

Commentary

30. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school has significantly strengthened its links with parents, other schools and the community to achieve very good partnerships which support teaching and learning.
31. It involves parents fully in their children's education and informs them of specific ways in which they can help their children learn. Carefully planned liaison with families of pupils joining Gearies means that parents know what to expect and also understand the support which they can give as partners in their children's education. The school is open and welcoming to parents. Attractive displays give them an immediate insight into school life. Regular newsletters, comprehensive information sheets on topics ranging from healthy eating to behaviour, and its website all convey a lively picture of life at the school. The school is particularly aware of the need for good communication with parents for whom English is an additional language and arranges for information to be translated for them where this would be helpful. Parents appreciate the programme of regular weekly meetings on different aspects of the curriculum. During the inspection, a well attended session on helping children to read took place, at which a very strong spirit of partnership was evident.
32. The school forges very good links with parents of pupils learning English as an additional language. Interpreters are employed for parents attending curriculum evenings or when gathering information given by parents so that staff can plan more effectively for pupils' needs. A welcome booklet for Tamil, Bengali and Albanian pupils has recently been prepared. Parents can take 'dual language' storybooks home to share stories in their home language with their children.
33. While the school could be more rigorous in consulting the views of the parental body through its parent-governors, parents find the school approachable and praise staff's willingness to act on individual suggestions.
34. The school draws on the community as a resource for learning and makes particularly effective use of local places of worship which represent the range of faiths in the area. Pupils enjoy a very good range of educational trips which enliven and extend the curriculum. They enthusiastically recall visits to the Science Museum and other venues. A trip to a large local supermarket is a good example of how these visits contribute to learning. As well as seeing computers in action in a working environment, pupils had a look behind the scenes at the complex processes involved in getting goods on the shelves.
35. The school is a founding partner in a group of local schools looking at ways to improve pupils' learning and this has added an extra dimension to teaching at the school by enabling teachers to share best practice. It has recently taken the lead in sharing its own successful methods with fellow members through the production of a DVD, and through staff who visit other schools to help support their teachers. The school is rightly proud of its involvement in the Gants Hill Taskforce. This has given pupils the opportunity to make a difference in their community by helping to create a large sculpture.
36. The school liaises almost daily with the adjacent Junior School, which is where most pupils transfer, to ensure an effective start on the next stage of pupils' education. Regular meetings take place so that Junior teachers are aware of individuals' needs. Frequent contact between pupils of both schools and the sharing of facilities ensure pupils face the transition with confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations by the headteacher are excellent. The leadership of senior staff is very good. Management is very good as is the governance of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Headteacher is strongly committed to continual improvement

- Leadership and management of support for pupils with additional needs, and for those who are learning English as an additional language, are very good
- Leadership is very good in the Foundation Stage
- Induction and development of new and established staff are excellent
- Governors know the school well and provide very good support for its work

Commentary

37. The headteacher has very clear views about the values and strategic direction of the school. These are shared very effectively with all who work in it and, as a result, there is very strong teamwork and the consistency that derives from shared values. These values are regularly reviewed and reinforced. For example, the statement on shared values is prominently displayed in the school entrance and is reviewed each year in consultation with staff, governors and parents.
38. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those learning English as an additional language is very well led and managed. In order to meet the diverse needs of these pupils, additional training is undertaken by staff, and teaching assistants are very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Rigorous checking of pupil performance is used to guide planning and changes to teaching. As a result the school has a curriculum very well suited to the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, or who have significant additional learning needs. The very good achievement by these pupils has been an important factor in the school's very good overall results in national tests.
39. In the Foundation Stage leadership is very good. It is ambitious, with very strong teamwork and good management. Currently, finances are very tight and this is a significant barrier in preventing the school providing outside areas for the Reception classes. The overall improvement plan for the school usefully addresses areas that relate to the Foundation Stage, although there is no specific Foundation Stage plan, which is unusual for such a large department.
40. Excellent induction procedures ensure that new teachers are fully supported by other experienced staff. The headteacher works hard to develop leadership and management skills in others. Established staff who have taken on new responsibilities meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss progress. The very good leadership of other key members of staff complements that of the headteacher and they work very effectively as a team with the clear aim of furthering pupils' academic achievement and personal development.
41. The school is very well managed. The well-established culture of self-evaluation ensures that all aspects of the school's work are improved. Rigorous checking of pupils' progress identifies weaknesses in learning so that these are quickly dealt with. Although action to raise standards in teaching in a few classes still needs to be taken the school is alert to this and plans are in place to do so. Teachers evaluate each other's work regularly, either as part of the school's very effective performance management process, or by a subject co-ordinator. They value the constructive feedback and any issues are logged and checked later to ensure performance has improved.
42. Staff and governors work very effectively together. The chairman of governors and headteacher meet routinely and other governors visit regularly, providing the necessary degree of challenge in their capacity as critical friend. There is a strong sense of partnership and a clear sense of accountability through governors' oversight of performance management procedures. The result is governors who have a very good knowledge of the strengths of the school, and those aspects which need improving. Governors are also alert to improving their own performance through training, and acting upon parents' views. For example, the role of the parent governor has been improved as a

result of a parents' survey, which identified some misunderstanding of how governors represent parents' views.

43. Finances are managed very effectively. The principles of best value are applied very well. The school compares its performance with similar schools and this helps set challenging targets. Staff, pupils and parents are routinely consulted on the further direction of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	840,485
Total expenditure	846,113
Expenditure per pupil	2,928

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,341
Balance carried forward to the next	17,713

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.

There has been very good improvement in provision since the last inspection, which reflects the very good leadership. Staff are very enthusiastic, have high expectations and make learning fun. Teaching and learning are very good in all areas with several excellent features in the Nursery. Very good planning and organisation enable the children to learn through imaginative whole class, group and independently chosen activities. The accommodation for the Nursery is excellent, but due to limited finances, it has not been possible to create an attached outside learning area for the Reception classes, which is the only significant weakness.

When children join the Nursery, a very high proportion are learning English for the first time and this means they do not speak confidently or actively engage with other children. Thus, overall, their skills and knowledge are lower than expected. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes the children make rapid progress and achieve very well in a very well organised environment, which is stimulating and challenging. Staff track children's development and plan lessons very carefully. Of note is the excellent practice of using the digital camera to assist with the recording of children's learning. This is often supplemented with very good assessment notes. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, almost all children have reached the goals expected for their age and a good proportion have exceeded these goals.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths

- Children show very good attitudes, behaviour, confidence and independence
- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching and learning
- Relationships are of a very high standard and often excellent in the Nursery
- Links with spiritual development are very good

Commentary

44. From children's lower than average point when starting school, they make very good progress in learning how to communicate and socialise with others. Standards are higher than average by Year 1 and play a significant part in children's very good achievement in the school as a whole. Most significantly, children grow in confidence and in their self-esteem. Teachers use praise very well. Very good relationships help the children to feel secure and take risks; this feature is excellent in the Nursery. There is a very strong emphasis on treating each other with courtesy and respect. Teachers plan activities so that children concentrate and persevere, seek help when needed and show a growing ability to initiate activities for themselves as, for example, when the Nursery children made dips using herbs from the garden. This involved much taking of turns, negotiating, learning to share and showing of initiative. In all classes, children learn how to express their feelings and experience wonder and joy in learning, which enhances their spiritual development. Children's behaviour is very good due to excellent management by teachers.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths

- Teaching and assessment are very effective, and so learning and achievement are very good

- Learning is fun and rooted in meaningful activities that the children enjoy

Commentary

45. Standards are above average by the end of the Reception year and achievement, from children's lower than average starting point when joining the school, is very good. Teaching is very good and supported by highly effective on-going checks on what the children do and what they need to learn next. Very well planned activities enhance children's speaking and listening skills. Staff are especially successful at encouraging children to talk through their ideas and to ask and answer questions with growing confidence. Children learn how to make up stories and staff often take part in the role-play to develop language. In the Nursery, staff constantly speak to the children about what is happening, enabling them to hear and use new words in natural conversations, which is excellent practice. The skill of listening is taught very successfully and is especially helpful to those at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language. Reading is linked very successfully with writing, with particular emphasis on learning letter names and sounds. Children learn writing skills very successfully because teachers provide time to demonstrate the skills and then encourage them to experiment for themselves. Moreover, children often use resources to help them to spell simple words independently and all writing activities are meaningful and fun. For example, the children made 'lift the flap' books about 'What's in the box?'.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strength

- Very practical teaching helps children to think for themselves and to achieve well

Commentary

46. This area of learning is well taught and, by the end of the Reception year, most children will have reached the goal expected for mathematics and a few will have exceeded this. The staff are skilled in helping the children to understand new things. For example, when cooking Rutti bread in the Nursery, children made circles of dough and compared the different sizes, which helped them to understand 'big, small and middle size'. In the Reception class, children make good progress in counting and beginning to recognise the patterns in simple addition sums to 10. Learning is challenging, with spontaneous changes to lessons to ensure that children of all abilities made progress. Good questioning and use of real objects for counting help children to think and solve problems, such as when finding out if 1 and 9 and 2 and 8 make 10 and then looking for other patterns. Sand and water activities are used successfully to help the children to learn about measuring. They know simple shapes and compare size and weights of objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

47. Limited direct teaching was seen during the inspection to judge the overall quality of provision. However, very good assessment information shows that almost all children make good progress and reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception year, which is higher than usual for this age. Teacher's planning shows an effective blend of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore and discover for themselves. This was seen when children mixed food colouring with cornflour and talked about the changes in texture as the water was added. Computers are used very successfully to develop above average skills. Children learn about many different cultural traditions, which helps them to respect the views and beliefs of others. Cutting, joining, folding and building activities are numerous; these provide a strong basis for design and technology work in Year 1.

Physical development

48. Too little direct teaching was seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement on provision. The outside area for the Nursery is an excellent facility for children to practise clambering and jumping and to improve their coordination, control and balance. While the Reception classes make use of facilities around the school, they do not have their own area adjoining their classrooms or sufficient bikes, scooters and large toys to provide informal learning opportunities. Many activities were seen which gave children opportunities to demonstrate fine hand skills when manipulating small objects and malleable materials, demonstrating good dexterity and co-ordination, as seen when Reception children made moving puppets to tell the story of Rama and Sita for Diwali.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is good.

Main strengths

- Children are encouraged to use their imagination and think for themselves
- Links with language, communication and social development are very good

Commentary

49. Children make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning because teaching is good and it provides a wide range of enjoyable opportunities that allow children to explore ideas and use their imaginations. Adults encourage children to respond to what they see, hear, touch and feel and to express their emotions. Role-play is well planned to link with developing children's literacy skills. For example, Reception children dressed up and acted out their own version of the book 'Brown bear'. Children confidently experiment with mixing colour when painting, and create interesting collages using a range of materials. Moreover, resources are well organised to encourage the children to select things for themselves and work with others, which has a positive impact on their personal and social development. Displays are used very well to celebrate children's work and enhance children's self-esteem; they are particularly good in the Nursery. Children sing simple songs from memory and enjoy making up compositions. Assessment is very good, with some excellent examples in the Nursery, as seen in the way in which African drumming skills were developed by a group of boys. Overall, standards are higher than expected by Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average; pupils' writing skills are particularly well developed
- All pupils achieve very well
- English is very effectively promoted in other areas of the curriculum
- Very good procedures for checking pupils' progress mean that the work is very well matched to their needs
- Teaching is often very effective but not always consistent

Commentary

50. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. High achievement in writing, confirmed in the results of national tests, stems from the considerable emphasis placed on pupils developing their vocabulary through practical activities such as drama, and the importance placed on teaching the individual skills of spelling and handwriting. Achievement in reading

is also rising because of the systematic way in which teachers assess what pupils can do and what they need to do next to improve.

51. Teaching is very good overall. Pupils' learning and progress are checked very effectively and teachers use information from this very well so that their planning meets the needs of individuals. A key quality in the best lessons observed was the teacher's use of questions to assess what pupils' know and to direct their thinking in order for them to make rapid progress. For example, during a good Year 2 literacy lesson, lower-attaining pupils discussed a story setting for the book 'A Pig in a Pond' with their friends before being helped in composing sentences and writing these with correct punctuation in speech bubbles on a storyboard. Planning and teaching is particularly effective for those with special learning needs and those learning English as an additional language. Teaching assistants are a significant factor in supporting teaching and learning. They are well briefed and knowledgeable, helping teachers to ensure that pupils progress very well. All pupils have individual targets for improvement and work enthusiastically to meet them, making good use of classroom resources such as 'word walls' to help them.
52. When teaching is less effective it is often because practical activities are less well organised and pupils find it difficult to concentrate on what they are supposed to be doing. Year 1 pupils, for example, were asked to listen to, and comment on, what other groups were saying in a drama lesson, but there were too many groups and they eventually lost concentration.
53. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They read confidently, using their knowledge of letter sounds very effectively to decode unfamiliar words and accurately predict the story. They are careful to present their work well. Recent efforts to develop handwriting have improved style and quality significantly throughout the key stage. They enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to listen carefully and provide a spoken response, such as at the end of lessons when they discuss and evaluate what they have learnt.
54. Leadership and management are very good. The deputy head teacher and the teacher responsible for English as an additional language share the role of subject leader. Work is regularly monitored and the results discussed with the Governing Body and other staff. Pupils' work is checked and lessons observed on a daily basis so that areas for improvement are quickly identified and dealt with through relevant staff training.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Language and literacy are developed very well through other subjects, including ICT and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). In ICT, for example, pupils gather information about the Victorians from CDs and type their writing to make a newspaper. In PSHE pupils are helped to listen carefully to what others say, to speak clearly themselves, and to use their knowledge of letter sounds on the many occasions when they have to write something.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average
- Pupils with special needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well, but higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently
- Very good leadership and management have ensured that teaching is good, with very good procedures for checking pupils' progress

Commentary

56. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the curriculum has been improved and now builds more effectively on skills that have been previously learnt. Standards are now above average and pupils achievement is good. Very good planning for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language means they achieve very well so that virtually all pupils attain or exceed average standards at the end of Year 2. Higher-attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they might because they are not being given enough opportunity to solve problems themselves by choosing from a variety of mental and written calculations. The school is aware of this and plans have been made to challenge these pupils further.
57. The quality of teaching is good overall. Effective planning and preparation ensure a good match of work to pupils' abilities. In good lessons the teaching shows an innovative approach that makes learning fun and excites the pupils so that they are alert and eager to learn. For example, a teacher in a Year 2 class used a puppet to encourage pupils to calculate the missing number to make a total of 10. As the parrot squawked "6" the children shouted "4", making the correct answer. In the less successful lessons the higher-attaining pupils had insufficient opportunities to work independently.
58. Teachers' planning demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of all pupils. This results from very effective procedures for checking pupils' progress. Rigorous analysis of national and other tests identifies areas of the curriculum that need more attention and groups of pupils that are not achieving well enough. Regular assessment of pupils' progress in lessons enables the teacher to match work accurately to pupils' needs and makes a very significant contribution to the raising of standards. This is clearly evident in the positive impact of the teaching assistants who work very well with pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. They give additional support, enabling pupils to move on to the next level of attainment. Marking of pupils' work identifies ways they can improve and homework is used very well to support learning and gives pupils opportunities to practice what they have learnt in school.
59. Leadership and management are good and have been crucial in the raising of standards for all pupils. Teaching and learning are regularly observed, and lesson plans together with the resulting pupils' work are also checked regularly. This provides very good information about strengths and weaknesses and ensures that prompt action is taken to raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed well in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 1 have sorted living and non-living things into different sets. In English, pupils in Year 2 have created counting rhymes and in art they have made butterflies with symmetrical wings. Teachers are alert to developing these links during lessons. For example, a teacher in a Year 2 class described the Quipus system of calculation of numbers, which was used in the past by South American villagers. This not only helped pupils calculate addition sums but also linked their learning in mathematics to geography and history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong emphasis on pupils carrying out first hand investigations has raised standards
- Pupils progress is carefully checked so they achieve very well
- Teaching is very good, but does not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently

Commentary

61. Standards are above average. Pupils' achievement is very good overall because a well above average number reach a higher level of attainment. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
62. Teaching is very good because lessons are very carefully planned to provide pupils with first-hand experience. Considerable work has been done to help pupils carry out practical scientific investigations in a methodical way so that they develop basic scientific skills and understanding. This was evident, for example, when pupils' undertook research to identify the best balls to buy for use in the Nursery. They learnt how to propose a hypothesis from the information they already had about balls, how to test this in a fair way, taking relevant measurements so that they could form a conclusion. The pupils' work was very carefully assessed so that teachers had an accurate view of what they could do and what they needed to do next to improve.
63. In other lessons seen during the inspection, pupils benefited from appropriate, good quality resources when they were learning about electrical circuits. As a result, all pupils developed a basic understanding of what makes a simple circuit work. Teachers made very effective use of an interactive whiteboard; a large, electronic board on which a computer screen is projected so it can be viewed easily by the whole class. This showed a computer simulation of a circuit so that the principle was brought vividly to life and significantly helped pupils' understanding. In the best teaching, the teacher challenged the most able pupils with additional questions which extended their understanding and scientific thinking. After completing a simple circuit, for example, they were asked to predict what would happen if an additional bulb were inserted, prompting them to link cause and effect. In a lesson where teaching was less effective, the task pupils had to carry out after watching a very good video film did not build on the knowledge they had already gained and demonstrated in discussion with the teacher. As a result, the most able pupils were insufficiently challenged.
64. The school has a range of appropriate resources for teaching and has created a particularly good resource for environmental education in its small 'wild' garden which provides pupils with opportunities to experience at first-hand the cycle and interdependency of plant and animal life.
65. Leadership and management are very good. There is an effective scheme of work and the checking of pupils' progress has been a key factor in recent improvements. The co-ordinator regularly observes lessons to help teachers develop their knowledge and confidence and has a clear plan for future action to improve teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, so pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average
- Excellent team work has raised standards significantly since the last inspection
- The subject is very well led and pupils' progress is carefully monitored
- Although resources are good, the small number of computers in classrooms hinders development of pupils' skills even further
- The subject is used effectively across the curriculum

Commentary

66. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average and all groups of pupils achieve very well. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.
67. Teaching is very good because of excellent team work. Lessons are taught in small groups. They are very well planned for different levels of ability, and are led effectively by both the class teacher and the co-ordinator. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy learning so they make very good progress. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the co-ordinator's clear instruction was very well supported by the class teacher's demonstration so that all pupils used the mouse correctly to create sentences from a word bank. Pupils quickly become familiar with the computer keyboard so that they enter text into a word processing program accurately and by Year 2 almost all pupils edit and print out their work independently. They use computers to create designs and retrieve information from databases and the internet. By programming floor robots, a good start is made in controlling events and learning how the accuracy of commands affects the movements of a machine. Teachers' clear explanations and secure knowledge of ICT are significant improvements since the last inspection.
68. Very good leadership and management have driven the improvement. Very effective training has developed teachers' knowledge, and this is evident in the confident way they teach skills. The subject co-ordinator evaluates teachers' planning and standards of pupils' work. As most lessons are shared with the co-ordinator there are regular opportunities to assess the quality of teaching. The school is beginning to maintain useful individual records of pupils' progress to track their achievement. The development of the computer suite has been well managed and has improved pupils' access to computers so that they are now used to support learning in other subjects. However, although interactive white boards have been established in Year 2 classes the small number of computers in classrooms is limiting regular use each day. For example, in a Year 2 class the interactive white board was used effectively to engage pupils' interest, enabling the teacher to demonstrate the retrieval of information from a CD. Although pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected of them many were unable to apply what they had learnt straightaway.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The school makes very effective use of ICT across the curriculum. This is because the weekly lessons in the computer suite are carefully planned to support learning in other subjects. Year 1 pupils have used the program 'Colour Magic' to design their own gardens in art and have produced pictures to support work in English on fantasy stories. Year 2 pupils have used hyperlinks accurately when making animal databases in science, and successfully downloaded pictures of Florence Nightingale from the internet to help their work in history.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient time was available during the inspection to assess in detail the provision in geography, history and religious education. These subjects, therefore, were just sampled.

Geography

Commentary

70. No teaching was observed during the inspection, but samples of work, discussions with teachers and the school's scheme of work indicate that the requirements of the national curriculum are being met and that standards are average.

71. Pupils begin to acquire an awareness of different localities and places that contrast with the area in which they live. Classrooms have large maps of the world displayed which highlight the countries that pupils' parents come from, or countries that pupils themselves have visited. Their sense of place is developed through simple 'passports' that pupils make, complete with their own address, and begin to express views on different localities through the medium of holiday postcards which they write to friends at home. Visits to local places and those further a field, such as the seaside, provide the first-hand experience necessary for pupils to develop their understanding.

History

Commentary

72. The one lesson observed during the inspection, examples of pupils' work and the school's own documentation indicate that the requirements of the national curriculum are effectively met and that standards are above average.
73. The quality of the teaching observed was good. Pupils demonstrated that they had remembered previously taught facts about the Great Fire of London, clearly understood what caused it and could offer simple explanations of why people acted as they did. They were aware that the first-hand account from Pepys' diary was likely to give an accurate description of what happened. Pupils with special learning needs, including those learning English as an additional language, were fully engaged in the lesson because the teaching assistant very skilfully kept their attention through a quietly whispered interpretation of what the teacher was saying. Their achievement was good as a result.
74. Very good use is made of information communication technology. Pupils use the internet and other programs to obtain pictures and information about historical characters, and their writing is developed when they type the information to make simple newspaper stories about past events.
75. Leadership and management are good because opportunities are created to link pupils' learning with other subjects. Interest is stimulated, for example, through events such as Black History week, and a Museum week. In the latter, learning was carefully planned so that pupils examined real objects and used first-hand evidence to describe and interpret the past. The introduction of schemes of work, and the rise in standards indicate good improvement since the last inspection.

Religious education

Commentary

76. The one lesson observed during the inspection, examples of pupils' work, discussion with staff and the school's own documentation indicate that the school complies fully with the Local Agreed Syllabus and that standards are above average.
77. The school ensures very good opportunities for learning about and developing an appreciation of the similarities and differences of the major religions followed by pupils. In addition to regular lessons, which involve close links with, and visits to, all the local places of worship, the school holds an annual 'week' when the beliefs and customs of a particular religion are celebrated in turn. This involves members of local religious groups spending time in school talking to pupils, and culminates in special event to which parents are invited and in which pupils and staff take part. This is exemplary practice.
78. Teaching was good in the lesson observed. Based on the story of Rama and Sita, pupils used their knowledge of the plot to relate events to good and evil in their everyday lives. Pupils, including those with special learning needs, discussed examples very sensibly with a

partner. Of particular note was the opportunity for pupils to reflect on the spiritual nature of religion when the teacher explained how she herself celebrates her own faith. However, in order to complete a planned written exercise, insufficient time was devoted to allowing the pupils to reflect on their own feelings.

79. Leadership and management are good. Work is planned in detail to develop pupils' knowledge from first-hand experience, while developing their skills in other areas of the curriculum at the same time. Computers are used to create Mendhi hand patterns for example, and the story of animals entering the ark are used to reinforce counting and simple multiplication. Strong links are made with pupils' personal and social education reflecting the school's statement of values.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Apart from physical education, insufficient time was available during the inspection for detailed assessment of provision in art, design technology and music. These subjects, therefore, were just sampled.

Art and design

80. There were no art lessons seen during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work and discussion with the subject leader indicate that national curriculum requirements are met and there is a clear plan for the development of art.
81. Pupils reach above average standards because they experience a wide range of activities to create pictures, including the use of ICT. They use paint and other media effectively to convey mood and feelings and have explored the work of David Hockney and Picasso. They have made three-dimensional papier mâché figures and work co-operatively in order to contribute to large displays illustrating their learning in other subjects, for example, nocturnal animals in science and Diwali in religious education. Pupils' work is attractively mounted and displayed alongside reproductions of fine art by Dali, Van Eyck, Gainsborough and others.
82. The school rightly places strong emphasis on pupils learning through the arts and this has been acknowledged through the award of the nationally recognised Gold Artsmark.

Design technology

83. No lessons were seen and little work was scrutinised during the inspection, therefore no judgements have been made on standards and provision. However, there have been improvements made since the last inspection. The scheme of work is now satisfactory and meets the requirements of the national curriculum. Photographic evidence shows pupils are designing and evaluating their work. For example, Year 2 pupils have designed vehicles using cogs and wheels and tested how far they would travel and this is appropriate for their age.

Music

84. As only two lessons were observe it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. However, teachers' planning and discussions with the subject leader indicate that National Curriculum requirements are likely to be fully met.
85. In one very good lesson observed the teacher engaged pupils' interest using contrasting examples of recorded music. They were encouraged to respond to it in a number of ways, including discussing their emotional response which provided a very good opportunity for them to develop their spoken vocabulary as well as developing listening and speaking skills.

Pupils enjoy music and sing well while groups of them provide simple rhythmic accompaniments on percussion instruments.

86. Music is used extensively as part of the school's emphasis on learning through the arts. There were examples of music being used in the classrooms at the start of lessons and at the beginning and end of assembly. Visiting musicians, such as a Jamaican group during Black History week, further extend pupils' musical experience.
87. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the curriculum which is already enhanced by violin lessons and a recorder club. The school has a satisfactory range of musical instruments, including several from other countries round the world.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

Main strengths

- Standards in physical education are above average
- Teaching overall is good with some excellent features
- There is a good range of after school activities that further develop pupils' skills

Commentary

88. The three lessons observed in physical education indicate that pupils achieve well and attain above average standards. Pupils with additional needs are well supported during the lessons and achieve very well as a result. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
89. Good, and sometimes excellent, teaching means pupils have positive attitudes and work hard. Both teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastically involved with the pupils as they develop their skills. They are alert to providing opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work and improve their performance. In an excellent Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher clearly explained to pupils that they were going to make up a dance to music that would be exciting and show lots of different movements. The pupils were given a short time to prepare and practise. During the performances the teacher discussed the dances, cleverly drawing out areas to work on. This encouraged pupils to identify the different types of movement and explain how it matched the music, and whether this was appropriate. Many suggested improvements and refined their dances to a high level.
90. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of sport during lessons and after school. For example, after school clubs run by specialist staff give further training in hockey, basketball, football, tennis and dance. Playtime activities also develop skills. For example, small netball posts are used to develop pupils' throwing skills.
91. Leadership and management are good. Teaching has been observed and aspects for development have been identified and improved through training. The scheme of work has been reviewed and changes made to ensure better coverage of dance. Since September more time has been allocated so that each class receives two hours of PE each week. Following a recent review the school has identified further training in gymnastics as an area for development. Resources are satisfactory but mats used for gymnastics are of poor quality.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject because only one full lesson was observed. However, discussions with pupils and staff and information

from school documents indicates that Personal, Social and Health Education is strongly promoted.

Main strengths

- Social skills are systematically developed throughout the school so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards others are very good
- Health education is supported and encouraged at all levels

Commentary

92. Very good support is provided for pupils' personal development. Self-discipline and respect for others underpins every aspect of the school's work so that personal responsibility is fostered at every opportunity. Class rules, for example, are agreed with pupils and referred to frequently, and link with the school's 'Value of the Month' such as 'respect for others'. The very good School Council plays an important role in providing pupils with a voice and emphasising that they can help shape their own community. Many of the playground improvements, for example, were planned by pupils who now, as a result, benefit from a good range of activities that enhance social play. Older pupils take responsibility for helping to settle the youngest when they start school. Pupils' personal achievements are recognised and valued through awards and regular assemblies.
93. The curriculum is very well planned. Lessons are based on a systematic scheme of work which link to the school's ten core values which are prominently displayed around the school. In the very good lesson observed, the teacher encouraged pupils to suggest ideas for the reward system they would like in their classroom. The role model she presented by listening carefully to and respecting pupils' ideas successfully created a thoughtful atmosphere in which all pupils felt their contributions were valued.
94. Involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative has improved eating habits at break and lunchtime. It also resulted in pupils themselves taking positive action to improve their diet when, on their own initiative and with the support of health professionals, they wrote a pamphlet encouraging parents to improve the quality of packed lunches. The pamphlet was subsequently printed and distributed to parents in other schools in the area.
95. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is well qualified for the role and oversees the curriculum as well as observing teaching to suggest improvements. She has ensured all staff are properly trained so that there is a coherent, whole school approach to fostering and recognising pupils' very good social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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