

INSPECTION REPORT

Millfields Community School

Hackney, London

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100231

Headteacher: Anna P. L. Hassan

Reporting inspector: Eileen Scott
21639

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 November 2001

Inspection number: 207531

Full 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
School address:	Hilsea Street Hackney London
Postcode:	E5 OSG
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Helen Wing
Date of previous inspection:	19 - 23 October 1998

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Eileen Scott 21639	Registered inspector		What kind of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Roger Watts 20655	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Beryl Rimmer 20655	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Religious education	
David Langton 3855	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Richard Evans 20692	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology	
Graham Todd 1224	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	Science English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is much larger than most primary schools. At the time of the inspection there were 494 full-time pupils in years Reception to Year 6. 38 children attend the nursery full-time and 36 attend part-time. The school is oversubscribed and pupils live in the school's designated area that consists of densely populated, rented and owner-occupied terraced housing and flats. The number of pupils in each year group varies between 70 and 77. As a consequence there are mixed age classes throughout the school. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is 41 per cent, which is high when compared with the national average. This is a significant decrease since the previous inspection but similar to the previous three years. Pupils reflect this ethnically diverse inner city community. Over half the pupils receive support in learning English as an additional language and a fifth of the pupils are at the earliest stages of acquiring English. Over 10 per cent of pupils are children of asylum seekers and 3 per cent are Travellers' children. Twenty pupils have a statement of special educational need, which includes 10 pupils in the Autistic Resource Base (ARB). A fifth of the pupils are on the special needs register. This is similar to the national average. Data indicates this number fluctuates from year to year reflecting the high mobility in the school population. A significant proportion of pupils move into the school at different points in the year. In one class half of the pupils have changed within the last two years. This high turnover of pupils means there are constant changes in the needs of pupils and the attainment profile of classes. The attainment of pupils on joining the school is variable but overall is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. At the heart of the school is the belief that the achievements, attitudes and well being of every pupil matter. The headteacher is the driving force and creates a climate where this principle translates into all aspects of school life. The leadership of the school is constantly seeking ways to extend its provision to meet the needs of the community it serves, such as the autistic resource base and the Saturday academy. The standards in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily year on year. Although the standards are not as high as those found nationally the gains made are substantial and are a credit to the school considering the pupils' different and often challenging starting points. The leadership has evolved an effective working team that is well placed to persist, refine and pursue the policies and procedures so that it sustains the improvements in teaching and learning. The curriculum is good and the excellent out of school provision has made a positive impact on the attitudes and achievements of pupils. The school contributes a great deal to the community by the access provided out of school hours. Although the school has a high income per pupil it uses this effectively to provide opportunities that take account of the pupils varied life experiences and needs. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and standards in music, religious education and the autistic resource base.
- The quality of education provided in the autistic resource base.
- Pupils who have been right through the school make good progress and achieve well.
- Provision of a secure and positive climate for learning that promotes appreciation, respect and understanding of diverse cultures, languages, ethnic and faith groups.
- Strong and persistent leadership that marshals all available resources to extend the provision and equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Parents' view of the school is very good.
- Provision for social, moral and cultural development.
- Excellent provision for activities outside the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- The pattern of the learning for pupils throughout the day and the effective use of time.
- The quality and consistency of teaching.
- The monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching so that there is rigorous feedback and clear action to improve teaching and spread good practice.
- Attendance levels.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection took place three years ago in October 1998. The improvement in this relatively short time is good. The school has tenaciously pursued the issues raised in the previous inspection. It has made good progress in strengthening leadership and management through the clearly defined roles of the assistant headteachers, subject and team leaders. The recent appointment of a school finance and administration manager has enhanced this further. There are good procedures and policies in place so that staff and governors can monitor what they are doing. Consequently the allocation of support for pupils with English as an additional language is effective. The school has addressed the weakness in the nursery provision. Teaching and the quality of curriculum in the nursery are good. There have been sound improvements in identifying and meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language. The capacity of class teachers to meet the needs of these learners is an area for further improvement as is the consistency in the quality of marking. The school continues to build on its previous strengths. Good improvements have been made in the curriculum provided, the assessment procedures and the provision for pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. As a result behaviour is good and pupils are polite and sociable. Standards are well below national expectations in the core subjects of English and mathematics despite year on year improvement. There is strong improvement in the standards pupils reach by the age of 7 years. In science and information and communication technology standards are now reaching the expected level for 11 year olds. Standards in religious education and music are now strengths of the school. The school improved its procedures to foster better attendance with innovative ideas. As a result, attendance levels rose but dropped back to unsatisfactory levels last year.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	D	B
Science	E*	E*	E	C

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E
 very low E
 *

The school has kept pace with improvements nationally and the upward trend in mathematics and science is particularly strong. The school is confident that this will continue and has set targets that reflect this. In science 88 per cent of the pupils attained the expected level for 11 year olds which is within 2 per cent of the national average. Mathematics is a similar picture; 65 per cent reach Level 4 or above. This is 6 per cent below the national average band. Pupils achieve well. Progress is sound throughout the school as is shown by the comparison with schools in similar circumstances. English is the weaker area. However, the number achieving the higher levels is relatively better with nearly a fifth of the pupils attaining the higher Level 5. The low number of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics and science impacts negatively on the average scores. The school is not as effective in consistently meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are achieving as well as other pupils. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies alongside intensive support and training has supported improvements in standards. In all subjects pupils are learning the skills and knowledge, but there is a weakness in writing and in their understanding of vocabulary. The high number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the high numbers of pupils who move into the school due to the inclusion policy has a negative impact on standards at the end of Year 6.

Overall children's attainment is well below average on entering school. In the nursery children make good gains in learning with strengths in their personal and social, physical and creative development. Achievement slows down in the reception classes. By the time pupils reach the age of 7 standards are

close to the national expectation with particularly strong performance in mathematics. Writing is the weaker aspect. Taking into consideration the starting point pupils are achieving well. Standards do not meet national expectations in art. This subject lacks cohesion throughout the school and leadership is weak. There is very good achievement in religious education and music, resulting in standards above national expectations. Standards are sound in all other subjects of the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like being in school and enjoy a challenge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils know right from wrong and are willing obey and respect those caring for them. Pupils behave very well in the playground
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect and value each other. This is an area where the school has achieved improvement.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance did improve for two years but last year rates fell to unsatisfactory levels. There is a significant problem with lateness.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are involved in decision-making and demonstrate a growing awareness of the responsibility they all have for their own well being and that of their peers. These strengths enable the school to function well as a harmonious, learning community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

This is a similar picture to the last inspection. High quality teaching in the Nursery, Year 2 and Year 6 is having a positive impact on standards, pupils' achievements and learning. The teaching for pupils in other years varies in quality where there is proportionally less very good and good teaching. Four lessons were unsatisfactory and one was poor. Teaching in English and mathematics is sound and there are examples of good practice throughout the school. Teachers effectively provide appropriate learning opportunities for all groups of pupils. Learning for higher attaining pupils does not always provide effective challenge to promote good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, inclusive and extended curriculum. Much improved since the previous inspection as a result of good leadership. The curriculum provided within the Autistic Resource Base is excellent. Excellent provision to extend and enrich the pupils' learning such as the 'Shine Academy'.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Learning support assistants are effective and class teachers have good strategies to meet pupils' needs. Weaker teaching impacts negatively on pupils' self esteem.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good. Multi-cultural development is excellent. Good improvement in all these areas since the previous inspection.

development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a secure, very caring environment. Procedures are good to promote good behaviour and extinguish racism and bullying.

The school is very effective in including parents in their child's learning. They have innovative provision to support parents linked to specific grants such as the learning mentors. As a result parents are committed to the school. They recognise, value and support the schools aims and aspirations.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Roles are clearly defined and the needs of individual pupils determine all the school priorities. The climate for improvement is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of their role and are developing sound systems to help them fulfil their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good. Systems for monitoring teaching and tracking pupils' progress are good. The governors and staff are beginning to scrutinise the data to inform their decision-making. The monitoring of teaching lacks rigour to support development in teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of resources to target the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

The school uses its generous staffing well to meet the needs of the pupils. It has defined all roles clearly and the management structure enables the school to run smoothly. The accommodation fulfils the needs of the curriculum and learning resources are good. The range of books in the library is a relative weakness. The leadership is a strength of the school. The school has set clear priorities on actions to improve. The headteacher is very successful in fostering a climate where pupils, staff and parents are willing to give of their best. The office staff are exemplary in their dealing with everyone. The school spends money wisely and is beginning to use comparative information to inform its decision-making.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

24 parents attended the meeting for parents and 70 (13 per cent of the school population) completed questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent attitudes and the celebration of diversity. • The good anti-bullying stance and the way the school monitors playtimes. • The school listens very well. The headteacher takes every issue seriously. • The school is always improving. Good leadership. • Recognition of individual needs. • Brilliant clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time spent on the carpet in whole class teaching. • The building. • Better secondary provision.

The parents praised many aspects of the school and this was reflected in the meeting, the questionnaires and written comments. They value, appreciate and are committed to school. The inspection team recognised rapidly the positive spirit in the school and agrees with the parents' views. The building is challenging and requires refurbishment. The use of time within lessons and providing a wider range of

learning styles is an area for improvement. The provision of secondary is beyond the remit of the inspection team.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has successfully improved standards year on year and has kept pace with national improvements. Last year the improvement was accelerated. As a result the gap between the standards in this school and those nationally has been reduced. The number of pupils attaining the expected level for mathematics and science at age 11 is getting closer to the national average. English standards are well below average. Writing is particularly weak. Within this picture the higher attaining pupils do better in English than in science or mathematics. These results have to be viewed in the context of the school; for example, there are a significant number of pupils who did not start school in the infant classes and for whom English is an additional language. Some pupils who started lower down in the school left before the end of Year 6. Statistical data, giving evidence of pupils' achievements over time, shows that the pupils in Year 6, who have come through the school, are achieving well.

Standards by the end of Year 6

2. Pupils are achieving soundly as they progress throughout the school. However, standards of work in lessons are below that found in other schools in English and Mathematics. In science standards of work meet the expected level for 11 year olds but they are not high enough when compared to national attainment, as there are few pupils who achieve the higher levels. There is a high level of mobility with about one fifth of the pupils leaving or joining the school throughout the year. This has had a significant impact on the results of the Year 6 pupils. Considering these challenges, the school is very successful in maintaining the upward trend. The targets set for the current group of Year 6 pupils are challenging and the school is confident in achieving them. The school admits a high number of pupils with special educational needs and this is skewing the results. Standards in this school are better in mathematics, similar in science and below in English to that found in schools of similar circumstances. The end of Key Stage 2 tests show that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in the school. Both are behind their respective national averages by about the same margin in all the core subjects.

Standards by the end of Year 2

3. By the age of 7 the success is even greater. Improvement has been good year on year and pupils are achieving well. They attain standards of work in lessons that are similar or better than those found in other schools in reading and mathematics. Writing is the weaker area where standards are below those found nationally but similar to schools in comparable circumstances. There is a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls over the previous three years. Girls do significantly better than boys. Inspection findings did not identify any difference in the learning opportunities for girls and boys. All have equality of access. In the best teaching there was appropriate provision for the learning styles of boys in the Foundation Stage¹ and Key Stage 1.
4. Children start school life in the nursery with a wide range of achievements but there are many with well below average levels of attainment in the basic skills of language, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1 attainment is below the levels expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve the expected standards in their personal and social, physical and creative development. Whilst they make good gains in their learning in the nursery, particularly in their personal and social and language skills, achievement slows down in the reception classes. Children with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make good progress as a result of very good levels of support in both nursery and reception.

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

5. Progress is good in the first two years of school. The good teaching in Year 2 results in all groups of pupils achieving well in reading and mathematics. Teachers help pupils' understanding and use of language well. Writing is consistently weaker across all the abilities of pupils although they make good progress. They can link sentences to form a narrative. However, the presentation of pupils' work is often unsatisfactory with pupils taking insufficient care with the size and spacing of their writing. By the time pupils reach the age of 7 most are achieving well in basic numeracy work and their mathematical language improves.
6. Pupils continue to make sound progress throughout the juniors. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress, which can be seen by their results in different tests and also in the progress they make towards their Individual Education Plans. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has supported the improvement in teaching and contributed to the substantial improvement in standards. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. The progress of average or below average pupils in reading is slower and their achievement is below the expected standard. Although pupils read words correctly, their limited vocabulary restricts their understanding of their meaning. In writing there is a very wide range of attainment. There are pupils who enjoy the challenge of writing and are producing high quality work. However, the majority of pupils produce a good quantity of writing but limited progress in Years 3 to 6 means that their vocabulary is restricted, sentences are often incomplete, punctuation is poor and there is little individuality in their writing. Progress slows in Year 4 where there is insufficient emphasis on extended writing. Pupils' presentation of their work is frequently careless. In mathematics the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has ensured that pupils are making sound progress in learning the knowledge but understanding is fragile. They find it difficult to use the most efficient strategy to solve problems. The school needs to address more closely the needs of the higher attaining pupils to ensure they reach the appropriate standards. The better teaching in science throughout the school results in good progress.
7. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language attain similar standards in science and mathematics to others in the school. In English the standards are relatively low. The pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. This is evident from their achievement in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. Their achievement at Level 4 or above is 35 per cent in English, 50 per cent in mathematics and 58 per cent in science. Some pupils make very good progress and achieve the higher Level 5 in these subjects. Observation of Year 6 pupils at work show that several pupils do not understand some key vocabulary, for example condensation, and are not able to explain their work as well as others. For example, 'the warm water has risen because the yeast has been eating the sugar'.
8. There is sound promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Language is explored well in science. Pupils write their evaluations or instructions in design technology. There are good examples in religious education with a high standard of accuracy and presentation in Year 2. However, there are missed opportunities in geography, history and science in the juniors to promote reading for research. The overuse of worksheets limits the opportunities for independent writing. Pupils are encouraged to use their skills of estimation when calculating the distance during an information and communication technology lesson. Weights are used in design technology. There are missed opportunities in lessons to challenge the higher attainers in the application of their numeracy skills by amending the task for these pupils.

Inspection findings

Subject	At the end of Year 2	At the end of Year 6
English	In line with national expectations	Below the standards found nationally

Mathematics	Close to national expectations	Below the standards found nationally
Science	In line with national expectations	In line with the standards found nationally
Information and communication technology	In line with the standards found nationally	In line with the standards found nationally
Art	Below the standards found nationally	Below the standards found nationally
Design and technology	In line with national expectations	In line with national expectations
Geography	In line with national expectations	In line with national expectations
History	In line with national expectations	In line with national expectations
Music	Above the standards found nationally	Above the standards found nationally
Physical education	In line with national expectations	In line with national expectations
Religious education	Good standards	Good standards

9. **Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the previous inspection. Resources are now better and the school uses the expertise of a teacher to develop teachers' skills. Music standards are good due to the high quality teaching. This provides pupils with a consistency that helps them build on their knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress throughout the school. The opportunity for making music out of school enriches pupils' experiences. Religious education is a strength. The good leadership has a very good impact on the teaching of the curriculum and teachers' knowledge. Art standards are lower than they were in the previous inspection. Leadership is unsatisfactory. Although the pupils' work covers all the attainment targets in the National Curriculum, the work displayed showed a limited range of media. Teachers' planning is constrained and shows that several require further direction and guidance.**

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The school has maintained the good attitudes noted at the time of the previous inspection and relationships between pupils have improved. Virtually all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their children enjoy school. Pupils demonstrate this as they work and play. Pupils feel secure and valued as individuals; a response to the very positive social ethos fostered by all the adults in the school. In lessons the attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are positive and they behave well. They try very hard so that they can keep up with their peers and have good relationships with the learning support assistants. When they work in small groups with their friends and with teachers from the learning support service their attitudes and behaviour are very good. They learn how to behave appropriately, take turns and listen to each other. They enjoy themselves and listen to and follow instructions very well. In the majority of lessons, where the teaching is stimulating, pupils are keen to answer questions, get on with the work set and strive to overcome problems. In the weaker lessons, however, too many pupils are reluctant to answer questions and, whilst they may make a steady start, come to a halt when they are uncertain about what they should be doing. Large proportions of pupils take advantage of the excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which has a strong impact on the way pupils value their school.
11. Pupils' behaviour is good and they behave very well in the playground. As one older pupil said, 'In some schools you see different groups playing separately but here we all

play together'. Pupils are polite as they move around the school, although there is occasional over-exuberance on the stairs. Lunchtime is a good social occasion and pupils eat lunch together in a relaxed atmosphere. In lessons pupils are obedient and respond quickly when staff ask them to do things or to modify their behaviour. There is a respectful relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils know right from wrong, acknowledge the relevance of the rules and abide by them. In a few lessons where teachers do not communicate their expectations clearly there is an undercurrent of minor disobedience such as ignoring the teacher's instructions or inattentiveness. When boundaries of expected behaviour are not clear pupils with special educational needs become upset and rebellious in response to teachers' comments. Last year there were four short fixed-term exclusions, which is broadly average for a school of this size. This number is too small to draw any conclusions about the prevalence of exclusion for any particular group of pupils, but observation during the inspection indicated that staff treat all pupils, whatever their ethnic group, equally fairly.

12. The ease with which the different ethnic groups mix together is a very notable feature of this school and is an example of the very good relationships that exist between pupils. Pupils have responded very positively to the school's efforts to promote a culture of understanding and tolerance for all ethnic cultures and religious beliefs. This is very evident in every aspect of their time in lessons, in the playground and in other activities. There is a very caring attitude that is particularly noticeable in the way pupils respond to the pupils from the autistic base. Other pupils do not simply ignore their sometimes disturbing behaviour but learn how to support them by spending time in the base and learning basic signing. In physical education, for example, if an autistic pupil falls over, there are always several pupils who will help them and try to find out if they are hurt. Another example is the 'friendship bus stop' system in the playground where a child can wait if they have no one to play with. There is very little bullying and pupils are confident that matters will be sorted out effectively. The pupil conciliation system, where specific older pupils are trained to listen to initial problems and try to get resolution by discussion, is an important and much valued part of this. Pupils accept the responsibilities offered willingly. They play an important part in helping supervisors in the dinner hall. The school council has a very responsible attitude and has been successful in bringing issues that worry pupils to the school's attention. An example was the recent improvement in the school toilets. In lessons, however, pupils do not always get sufficient freedom to take responsibility for their own learning.
13. Attendance was poor in the previous inspection. The school made considerable efforts to improve this. It employed many varied and innovative procedures. As a result attendance rates improved over two years and reached average levels. However, in the latest reporting year attendance was very low in comparison with the national average and unauthorised absence was high. The reasons for last year's significant drop are unclear and the school could produce little analytical evidence, partly because of deficiencies in computer data storage. There is no evidence that it was due to any particular ethnic group of pupils and little time was recorded as lost because of days for religious observance. Punctuality has improved since the previous inspection but is still an issue for the school, with significant numbers arriving after the official start time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is satisfactory overall. This is a very similar picture to the last inspection. In almost one half of the lessons observed, teaching was either good or very good. A small proportion of the teaching was excellent. In just under one half of the lessons, teaching was satisfactory. In 5 per cent of lessons there was some unsatisfactory and poor teaching in reception and some junior classes. The high quality teaching occurs in the nursery, Year 2 and Year 6. In these classes, the large proportion of good and very good teaching is having a very positive impact upon standards, pupils' achievements and learning. The teaching for pupils in other years varies greatly in quality particularly in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5, where there is proportionally much less very good and good teaching. Teaching is good overall for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and the impact of this can be seen in the 2001 national test results for 7 and 11-year-old pupils.
15. Class teachers have good strategies to ensure they include all pupils, including those with a range of special educational needs in their classes in all subjects. This is assisted by the skills they have gained in including pupils from the Autistic Resource Base. Small group teaching provided by the local authority's learning support service is good. However, some support teaching of small groups is unsatisfactory as teachers miss opportunities to help raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
16. Teaching for children in the nursery has many good features. For example, children get good opportunities to make independent choices, planning is very good and tasks are well matched to their ability and age range. Good teaching is supported by the strengths of the team, with the teaching of language being a priority. Consequently, the children's language skills develop well and those children who have little or no English make good progress. This results in children gaining confidence and self-esteem as they learn to communicate with increasing accuracy. In reception, the design of the tasks does not match the children's rate of progress, some are far too easy and children become bored. Other children find the tasks are too hard and require a great deal of help.
17. In Years 1 and 2 a feature of the best teaching is the planning that builds successfully on prior learning. For example, in an excellent science lesson the teacher effectively reinforced vocabulary that pupils had learned the previous week. They were studying materials and good, probing questions helped them to remember similarities and differences in the properties of glass and wood. In personal, health and social education lessons, pupils had been studying healthy eating. This was followed up in design and technology when pupils applied their knowledge to design a salad made up of vegetables that they liked. Good labelling of the different vegetables helped pupils to develop their language. Where teachers have high expectations the pupils rise to the challenge. In a Year 2 religious education lesson, the teacher created atmosphere and occasion by lighting candles, pulling down blinds and dimming the lights before telling the story of Hanukkah. This helped pupils to talk about their feelings and learn more about the Jewish religion. Occasionally, language skills are not well taught. For example, in a Year 1 class there was insufficient focus upon the teaching of phonics when asking pupils to sound out letters. In a few lessons, noise levels are too high and pupils call out too much. This makes it hard for pupils to stay on task and they lose concentration.
18. In Years 3, 4, 5 the teaching is satisfactory. There is some good and very good teaching in these classes but the quality of teaching lacks consistency. Teaching is best in Year 6 where over-two thirds is good with just under one third being very good or excellent. Expectations tend to be higher in Year 6 and there is more urgency about the work. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils faced a timed task: to order mixed decimals involving different units of measurement such as millimetres, centimetres, and metres. Management in the Year 6 classes is good. This enables teachers to make effective use of time ensuring lessons maintain a brisk pace and that pupils achieve objectives. In an

excellent music lesson pupils responded to the challenging teaching by listening carefully, stepping out the rhythm of the bass note to a composition by Vivaldi and gradually learning to move accurately and in time with the music. A very good information and communication technology lesson developed pupils' learning. Instead of just copying the design of magazine covers the pupils used their skills of layering, sizing and drawing images to design magazine covers of their own. In a similar lesson in another Year 6 class, the teacher effectively used the higher attaining pupils to help others who are not as confident. In some classes, pupils do not listen well. An example of this came in a Year 4 poetry lesson that lacked pace and because of this, several pupils lost interest. In other lessons some of the tasks are not challenging enough and the pupils become restless.

19. In personal, social and health education there is considerable emphasis on developing the pupils' skills both in lessons and throughout the school day, in a variety of creative ways. This results in pupils developing a real ownership for many areas of school life. Teachers instil a sense of pride and ambition in the pupils as they move through the school, helping them to recognise strengths and areas for further development both academically and socially. Teachers are increasingly using information and communication technology as a means of developing their own subjects. They are well supported by the subject leader who has good skills to teach and support staff in this process.
20. Teachers ensure that they include all pupils, regardless of their individual differences or learning needs. The vast majority of teachers know the pupils very well. The informal assessment during lessons is effective and used to inform what happens in the future. Most teachers' marking of pupils' work is good with helpful comments to aid improvement. A weakness in marking is when teachers fail to comment on pupils' poor presentation of their work. Formal assessment procedures are very good and the school has accurate data that enables them to track pupils' progress. However, teachers are not yet effectively applying this to their planning for higher attaining pupils. Most teachers are aware of this weakness, but find it difficult to provide suitable tasks and materials that provide an appropriate extension or enhancement of the curriculum. However, there is good practice in the school. The part-time teacher, working with some of the higher attainers, is making an effective contribution by ensuring that identified pupils work at a higher level in literacy and numeracy lessons. This extra initiative and the booster classes are helping to raise standards. This work needs extending, so that the school identifies higher attainers much sooner and gives them relevant and challenging work from the moment that they start school. Another weakness in teaching is the time pupils spend sitting on the carpet listening and interacting with teachers in literacy and numeracy sessions. In some lessons this amounted to forty minutes or more, which was far too long. There were only a few lessons in mathematics, where there was a short, sharp mental arithmetic session at the beginning of the lesson. In the long sessions, pupils tended to become restless, lose concentration and start chattering. This reduced the time available for pupils to work on the tasks that were the main focus of the lesson. Overall, the strategies used for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils used their literacy skills well across the curriculum when writing in a Year 2 history lesson about Florence Nightingale, but this is an area for further development. The school had highlighted oracy as a particular focus. Teachers created opportunities to develop pupils' speaking, but emphasis on this was inconsistent.
21. The school deploys learning support assistants well and they support the pupils' learning effectively. They work well with pupils assessed as having special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. For example, in the nursery, asking pupils to choose a rhyme and then singing and making actions together overcame early learners' hesitation. This developed their confidence and familiarity with the meaning and structure of the English language. Very good relationships and good understanding of

the needs of the pupils are strong points of the work of all support staff. Seven Year 1 early stage learners of English in a withdrawal group developed good phonic knowledge. They all had one letter each and had to stand in the correct order according to the sound of words, such as fat, can and fin. Key Stage 1 teachers provide good opportunities for language and subject learning. In Key Stage 2, such opportunities are satisfactory. Some mainstream teachers in both key stages provide very good opportunities for acquiring language and learning of subjects. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, use of appropriate vocabulary while demonstrating properties of materials such as twisting, bending, stretching and squashing promoted good learning and language acquisition. Teachers and support staff make a strong team who work hard to ensure pupils learn satisfactorily, feel confident to tackle challenges, and are proud of their achievements.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

22. The school provides a good, inclusive and extended curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities. The curriculum provided within the Autism Resource Base is excellent. The curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school has rectified weaknesses identified in the provision for design and technology and information and communication technology, in homework and in the arrangements made for pupils for whom English is a second language. Much credit is due to the curriculum co-ordinator who has been in post for only one year, and who has worked very hard to introduce significant improvements.
23. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for children under six are good. Since the last inspection, the provision in the nursery has much improved as a result of good planning and organisation. The school has worked hard to introduce an appropriate curriculum for the Foundation Stage, comprising the nursery and reception classes. Good planning provides a broad range of interesting and relevant activities. Classrooms are organised into clear areas of learning with a generous number of good quality resources to prepare children appropriately for the subjects of the National Curriculum. There is a suitable emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The planning, securely based on the areas of learning, provides a sound basis and staff are beginning to work effectively as a team to arrive at a more cohesive approach to this age group.
24. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is appropriately broad but the balance between the generous time allocated to physical education, and the relatively short time allowed for history, geography and science is inappropriate. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is a strength across the school. The school has recently revised its time allocations to subjects and these are still under review. The generous time allocation for English and additional timetable slots for reading, spelling, writing workshops and handwriting are appropriate for the pupils and are helping to raise standards in this subject. Less satisfactory are the over-long sessions of 75 and sometimes 90 minutes in a significant number of classes for literacy and numeracy. Within these, and in other lessons, pupils often spend too long on the carpet. Curriculum time overall, across the whole week, is close to the national average in Key Stage 2, and above average in Key Stage 1. However, lessons usually begin rather late, after 9.30 am. There is a need for the school to amend the timetable, in order to use time more effectively.
25. There are good, up-to-date policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and follows the guidelines for religious education in the locally agreed syllabus. Sex education, drugs awareness and health are well provided within personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons and through visits from outside speakers. The senior

management team reviews the curriculum regularly, and all subject co-ordinators prepare improvement plans for their subjects annually, which are in turn presented to governors for consideration. There are named governors for curriculum areas, but their contact with subject co-ordinators is under-developed. Arrangements for homework, a weakness identified earlier, have improved and are now good. Over three-quarters of parents say that they are happy with the provision for homework. Since the previous inspection the satisfactory introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the adoption of new national guidelines for most other subjects have enhanced the curriculum. These are helping to raise standards. The curriculum provides effectively for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is a second language, and those in the Autistic Resource Base. However, higher attaining pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge. Good use of specialist teachers for music, information and communication technology and special educational needs is helping to raise pupils' attainment. Parents receive excellent information about each term's curriculum in each subject, with suggestions for ways in which they can help their children.

26. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school uses a range of strategies, which includes small group work for different purposes, supporting in classes, support from the local authority's learning support service and working with teachers on adapting the curriculum to ensure that all pupils can access the work. Individual education plans are good, as targets are specific, measurable and achievable. Year 5 and 6 pupils are divided into groups of differing abilities for numeracy. This is helping to raise standards, especially for higher attaining pupils.
27. **The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for all pupils, including those in Years 1 and 2, and even in reception classes, which is rare indeed. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Ninety-four per cent of parents express strong approval for the school's extra-curricular provision. From Breakfast Club to Playcentre, activities are provided for pupils from 7.00 am to 6.00 p.m. Pupils in reception classes attend the 1 o'clock clubs offering story, drawing, singing and social development games. For pupils in Years 1 and 2 choir, recorder, homework and dance clubs are available. During the inspection groups of pupils from Years 1 – 6 took part in dancing, drumming and judo clubs. Other choices for older pupils include basketball, boys' and girls' soccer, choir, drama, and computers. The early morning breakfast club is a facility much appreciated by parents as is the after-school 'Playcentre' club offering many activities such as mini-soccer, board games, and table tennis until 6.00 pm. Booster classes within lesson time, on Saturdays through the Shine Academy, attended by over 90 pupils, and voluntarily after lessons at the end of the day, help to raise standards. Visits to places such as Sutton House, the Tower of London, Greenwich, and from visitors such as the storyteller further enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Large numbers of pupils take advantage of many of these activities, indicating both the need and the enthusiasm.**
28. **The school's provision to ensure the equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum is excellent. The very strong inclusion policy supports the high pupil mobility well. The school has identified Turkish boys and Caribbean pupils for support. It provides planning documents for pupils of all abilities, although the use teachers make of these is inconsistent. There is very good provision for pupils in the Autism Resource Base to be fully included in the curriculum, such as assemblies, physical education and swimming lessons. Since the previous inspection a teacher has been allocated responsibility for gifted and talented pupils and the school has begun to identify and make provision for these pupils with additional small group teaching. This is a further improvement. Boys and girls of all ages, abilities and beliefs, work and play well together. There is a girls' soccer club and girls were observed learning judo with boys. The inspection confirms the view of the headteacher that 'the school provides a truly inclusive curriculum'.**

29. **The school's provision for the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. There are regular timetabled lessons for the subject. For example, Year 2 pupils learn about personal hygiene and substance use and abuse. Through the 'Excellence in Cities' project two mentors support pupils with personal and social difficulties that affect their learning. The peer mediation group, where trained pupils help resolve minor issues of contention in the playground, has helped to reduce the level of incidents and complaints. The school works closely with the Drugs Advisory Service, and is part of the Healthy Schools and National Fruit schemes. A feature of the school's friendly ethos and inclusivity is the way everyone, adults, pupils, teachers and governors address one another by first names. Since the previous inspection a school council has been formed with two representatives elected from each class. Pupils value these responsibilities and take them seriously. All parents responding to the parental questionnaire feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school supports awareness of citizenship especially well, with a number of teachers emphasising the concepts of debate, election, responsibility and disagreement in their classroom displays. Adults are very good role models and give priority to developing pupils' self-esteem, widening their social experience and developing a growing interest in learning. These values are implicit in the school's ethos. The inspection team agrees with the parent who wrote praising 'the school's unequivocal commitment to social inclusion'.**
30. **The school has improved its' links with the local community. They are very good. Strong links with ING Barings Bank with a pupil/mentor system is helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. The school hosts the 'Happitime' community toddlers' group. Pupils give public performances, for example poetry and singing in the Hackney Empire, and have won the local police disco dance competition. The school is closely involved in the annual Community Saturday. Pupils make good use of the local swimming baths, where coaches speak highly of their very good attitudes. There are good links with local schools, through inter-school matches and swimming galas, and a strong emphasis on developing social skills through entertaining visitors. Pupils from a secondary girls' school help with breakfast club and have assisted with an after-school mathematics project. Millfields Community School truly serves its community well.**
31. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is good for spiritual development, very good for moral and social development, and excellent for cultural, especially multi-cultural development. These judgements indicate good improvements in all areas since the previous inspection.
32. The good provision for spiritual development is through daily acts of collective worship or class assemblies. Moments for prayer and reflection are symbolised by the focus on and the extinguishing of a lit candle. During the inspection the festival of Diwali was celebrated sensitively. In assembly some of the younger pupils took an intake of breath in awe and wonder at the display of artefacts to celebrate Diwali. Spirituality is also identified in music, through the fulfilment of pupils, and in religious education lessons.
33. Provision for moral development is very good. Adults are excellent role models and uphold the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils receive clear guidance on distinguishing between right and wrong and know how to handle problems by contacting adults, despite having difficulties in expressing themselves. One very young pupil, with few words of English, approached an inspector with another pupil, indicating the problem by tapping his own head with a clenched fist and saying 'Him-me-boom, boom!' Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils understand the rules of the school and classes

make up their own rules with class teachers, such as listening politely and respecting another's point of view.

34. The school supports its very good provision for social development through encouraging pupils to work and play together harmoniously. The peer mediation system works effectively to reduce incidents in the playground. Older pupils are taught how to resolve conflicts and not take sides. Pupils with special educational needs and those from the Autistic Resource Unit are treated respectfully by classmates, and parents appreciate the growing awareness and respect their children gain from these encounters. The Friendship Bus-stop scheme enables older pupils to care for younger ones and to build good relationships. Attendance at clubs gives further opportunities for pupils to interact with each other and to improve their social skills. Pupils' awareness of the needs for others is supported by collections for charities such as the National Maths Day, a skipathon and an anti-litter campaign. Pupils sing and perform locally for the elderly. They are socially at ease with adult visitors and engage easily in friendly conversation. Personal development is promoted by 'Walls of Success' displays in classrooms which enable pupils to develop self-esteem when measuring their success.
35. The excellent provision for pupils' cultural development is a strength of the school. Millfields is a multi-faith and a multi-cultural school, and rightly celebrates its diversity constantly. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn from others about others. The school makes good use of visits to places such as museums, an art gallery, a mosque and historic buildings such as Sutton House. There are Internet links with Jamaica and China. The school supports pupils well during Ramadan. In geography, pupils study an Indian village. In history, the October black history month celebrates the lives of people such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Stephen Lawrence. An assembly included a Hindu prayer. The multi-cultural character of the school is emphasised in the reception area. There are 'Welcome' notices written in a large variety of languages, and details and photographs of staff with abilities in over a dozen foreign languages. The school makes pupils very aware of the different festivals and celebrations within different world faiths, during their assemblies and religious education lessons. Multi-cultural displays abound around the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school has effective procedures for caring for pupils, who feel happy and secure as a result. Staff trained in basic first aid care well for pupils who are ill or who have accidents. During Ramadan, staff take special care of pupils who have chosen to fast. Pupils are confident that if they have personal worries they can take this to any staff. The younger pupils were in no doubt that the person they would go to was 'Anna', the headteacher. The two learning mentors funded through a special project are available at most times to hear problems. Child protection procedures follow local guidelines supported by appropriate training which is disseminated to all staff. Where the school has initial concerns, it gets good support from outside agencies such as social services. Staff within school also give good support to pupils who are at risk. The personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum includes advice and warnings to pupils about how to keep themselves out of dangerous situations and of appropriate relationships between themselves and adults. The learning mentors provide a good focus for co-ordinating personal support, as they also deal with problems with lateness and poor attendance. In addition, the school runs a breakfast club and after school care sessions and homework clubs, all of which help support groups of pupils with particular needs.
37. The schoolkeeper and school safety representative regularly assess the school buildings for risk. Where immediate remedial action is possible, it is done. Otherwise a report goes to the headteacher or finally to governors. The lack of procedures for recording site inspections was a concern in the previous inspection report. Although these have

improved, the system still lacks a rigorous centralised record which will allow easy access to risks identified, action planned and successful completion or otherwise. Risk assessment of activities is currently ineffective in some areas as evidenced by the continued risks. Physical education lessons are a particular concern, with staff and pupils being inappropriately dressed. Some staff seem unaware of the risk of pupils colliding with walls or the brick pillars in the playground. The use of stairs by kitchen staff carrying large trays of hot food at the same time as pupils are coming in from break is also a serious risk. Whilst the school knows and has planned longer term solutions for some of these risks, such as a kitchen lift, planned short term actions are inadequate.

38. The school's procedures for improving attendance are satisfactory. There are notable strengths in the efforts to persuade parents of the benefits of good attendance but the weakness is the analysis of data that would support such efforts. The school has adopted several innovative approaches to foster good attendance such as the use of mobile text messaging. Staff discuss with parents ways of improving punctuality if pupils are consistently late. Fewer parents take extended family holidays during term time. Pupils who attend well are rewarded. The introduction last year of a computerised system for registration and data analysis has made overall statistics easier to calculate. However, it has had teething problems. Consequently the school has fallen between the stools of having traditional registers which allow visual assessment and the equivalent information provided by data analysis software. As a result it has not sufficiently accounted for the significant drop in attendance last year. The recently appointed administration assistant has rapidly improved the management of the system and there is now improved regular access to reliable data. The school is moving to a more reliable system in the next academic year.
39. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. These build on the ethos of respect and care which staff so successfully generate. There is a very clear and consistently operated system of rewards and sanctions which pupils understand and respect. Pupils regularly win praise and recognition in assemblies and build up individual rewards in lessons that count towards greater prizes. Pupils value these rewards and strive to earn them, which promotes an orderly atmosphere in most classrooms. This, in turn, allows them to learn well. The local authority's learning support service provides some specific teaching for pupils, who have difficulties in managing their behaviour, in withdrawal groups with pupils from their class. Teachers plan carefully to help pupils learn how to manage their behaviour and gain social skills. The pupil-operated conciliation system also helps to smooth tensions before they become too large and, if they do, staff resolves them with sensitivity. As a result, there is little bullying or racism. This is a major achievement in a school with such a wide range of groups of pupils. The school records incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and the few racist incidents. These records indicate what action has been taken. This is used well to ensure there is a consistent response in line with school policy and reflects the school's firm stance on rejecting all forms of harassment or inappropriate behaviour.
40. The previous report noted that the school had achieved much in developing the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. It has continued this process well. It reviewed and revised the assessment policy in April 2001 and produced a comprehensive system of assessment procedures. These procedures are very good, and provide the school with a detailed base on which to support and guide pupils' academic and personal progress.
41. The school gathers a wide range of assessment information from the regular testing of pupils' literacy, mathematical and reasoning abilities. These are in addition to the statutory national tests. There is a good system of assessing and recording pupils' language development at least twice a year for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. When children enter the nursery staff diagnosed and support

particular needs at an early stage, allowing all children to be fully included in activities. There is very good liaison with the school's specialist resource base. Learning support assistants play a significant role in noting pertinent observations as children participate in activities. All subjects have assessment sheets detailing what individual pupils have learned and achieved. Teachers complete these either weekly or at the end of a unit of work. These are monitored regularly by an assistant headteacher, who has overall responsibility for assessment and recording, and subject co-ordinators. Assessment information is transferred to pupils' profiles. These contain individual pupils' records of achievement through the school including targets, so that the school can monitor progress. It meets the statutory requirements outlined for statements of special educational need. It analyses pupils' test results and uses the information to set targets of expected achievements for pupils. However, the school does not have the expertise to provide diagnostic assessment of pupils' areas of strength and weakness. When it requires this information, the school buys in advice from outside agencies.

42. Teachers discuss targets for literacy, numeracy and personal development with pupils. There is good parental involvement. Parents receive a copy of their children's targets and can discuss them at parents' evenings. The senior management team closely analyses all assessment information. They use this to target support for pupils, to arrange groups within classes, to track individuals' progress and predict their performance in national tests. They also use the information to set school, class and group targets for raising standards such as improving pupils' extended writing. The use of assessment information to modify other areas of the curriculum is less evident.
43. Good documentation ensures that senior management, co-ordinators and class teachers are all aware of their specific responsibilities. There are regular meetings of staff to ensure consistency in assessment procedures. In these meetings discussion takes place on samples of pupils' work and their National Curriculum levels. The senior management team monitors samples of pupils' books monthly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school cares for and educates their children. A written comment sent to the team by a parent of two children reflects the responses of many parents: 'They (children) have been active and enthusiastic members of a vibrant school community to which children from a kaleidoscopic range of backgrounds and cultures feel they belong'. At the meeting held before the inspection, parents were fulsome in their praise of all aspects of the school. This reflected in the questionnaire, from which there were no significant areas of concern. The only minor concern was that of homework. Some parents felt there was too much and others not enough.
45. The school has very good relationships with parents. It makes very good efforts to involve the parents in the school and in their child's learning. It shares individual education plans with parents and home-school books provide a useful link with home. When the child starts in the nursery or reception class, both the child and parents get good information to help them settle in smoothly. Essential documents, such as the school prospectus and letters are made available in heritage languages to promote communication. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school issues the prospectus to all parents every year. The home-school agreement lays down in clear language what is expected from all parties to the agreement. Parents are well informed about the general life of the school by the fortnightly *Millfields Mag*. In addition, each term class teachers send home a list of the work to be done, with suggestions of ways in which parents can contribute. Pupil reports are satisfactory and contain a comment on every subject but some of these comments are very brief and tend to refer to attitudes rather than progress. However, this information is supplemented well by a

meeting with the teacher each term at which targets for improvement in English and mathematics are discussed with parents. Over 60 per cent of parents attend these meetings. Help with translation of documents or interpretation into 14 different languages is available on request by parents. This was a concern at the time of the previous inspection but is no longer so.

46. The school makes very good provision for educating the very diverse parental community both to improve their English and their skills in supporting their child's education. Over 100 parents attend weekly classes and more come to fortnightly coffee mornings to discuss aspects of the curriculum. Parents are keen for their children to attend the extra Saturday classes of the 'Shine Academy' and some come to support them. A few parents help around the school but many attend special events organised by the school such as St Patrick's evening and the Christmas Fair. Some parents help with the clubs before and after school. The parents and staff association raises valuable funds and there are many other examples of support by parents for the school as a whole. Support for their children with reading and homework is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school are very good which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher is a very good leader of people. She has a clear insight into the needs of staff and pupils, and what the school needs to do to improve further. The message is clear to all that the achievement of every pupil is at the heart of all the school's work. As a result pupils' personal, social and cultural development have improved and are strengths of the school. There is a continual improvement in standards year on year and the school has good systems in place to help it evaluate pupils' success.
48. A notable feature of the school is the way it seeks to access funds to extend its provision. As a result there is excellent provision out of school. It supports groups of pupils, such as the higher attainers in Year 6, through these funds. It promotes family learning through parent classes in school. The autistic resource base is another example of the school extending its provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. This provision is of high quality and has rapidly become integrated into the school community. The knowledge pupils, parents and staff have of the base are a testimony to its inclusion.
49. The management team provides a range of talents, enthusiasm and energy and provides the school with good capacity to succeed. Since the previous inspection the roles of everyone in the school have been clearly defined. The delegation of responsibilities is well matched to the needs and the context of this school and ensures that special educational needs and learners of English as an additional language receive high priority. The headteacher has enabled her senior management staff to take greater responsibilities and move the school forward in terms of curriculum provision and assessment. She has created a professional climate where the value of self-evaluation is recognised. There is now a strong shared sense of purpose. The senior management team works closely together, and has high expectations of staff and pupils. Subject leaders now have increased responsibility for the subjects delegated to them. There is a good system in place to monitor teaching and the implementation of policy. However, information gathered does not focus sufficiently on the impact of the teaching on learning. It is not clear how teachers can improve or what action the school will take to support the improvement. The school is aware of the need to use this system more rigorously to spread good practice.
50. The school is effective and has made good improvements on the key issues identified at the last inspection. In addition it has continued to build on its strengths such as curriculum, pupils' personal development and behaviour. It has significantly improved the

teaching in the nursery and the team approach ensures good support for new staff. The facilities and increased expertise in information and communication technology have improved standards. Assessment systems have improved and teachers now have scope to use assessment effectively in their planning. The school improvement plan is an effective tool and helps the school to manage change well. However, it lacks clear success criteria to indicate what the school wants to achieve by carrying out these actions and the cost. Costs are calculated but not shown on this document. It would help all staff to know what they are aiming for so that all are clear about the school direction and what it will look like when it is achieved. There is good capacity to improve. The school uses both conventional and innovative methods. For example, although attendance is low, the procedures for encouraging it are good and persistence is required to reverse the downward trend. The different ways used to deploy expertise in music, information and communication technology and religious education are all having a good impact.

51. As leader of special educational needs the assistant headteacher provides good opportunities to develop the inclusion of all pupils at a senior management level. She has identified the needs and is aware of involving all teachers in the changes. Documentation is well organised. Good use is made of the valuable support provided by the educational psychologist. The register does not show an overall picture of the pupils' special needs or the way in which pupils move from different levels of the Code of Practice². The school has not carried out formal monitoring of teaching and consequently some support teaching is unsatisfactory. It has not evaluated the effectiveness of learning support assistants.
52. The school analyses the performance of pupils who are learning English as an additional language as well as the development of their English. The school has acquired direct management of the devolved specific grant and subsequent employment of staff from the start of the current financial year. Since then, the school has informally monitored its effectiveness. Observation of the work of support staff shows that they are deeply committed and provide effective support to the target pupils. However, the school needs to provide regular professional guidance to ensure that the support assistants meet the needs of the target pupils even more effectively. The quality of leadership and management are good.
53. The governing body is effective and improving. Named governors take responsibility for curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play an active role in shaping its direction. There are good systems in place for subject leaders to inform governors about their subject and make bids for resources to target improvement. Governors scrutinise the data provided by the school and use this information well to inform their decision-making. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. It is committed to equality of access for all. It takes positive steps to promote inclusion of all pupils and staff. For example, it makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Similarly, good teaching of pupils with English as an additional language enables these pupils to play their full part in the life and learning of the school. The school analyses data in terms of boys, girls and ethnic origin. It sets suitable targets and takes action where necessary.
54. Resources are good. There are a good number of teachers and class sizes are below 30, allowing teachers to know their pupils well. Some subjects, such as music and information and communication technology, are supported by specialists who teach many lessons in place, or with the support, of the class teacher. This has had a strong impact on the standards in music and the improvement since the last inspection in information

² Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

and communication technology. Subject co-ordinators are qualified by experience or training in their subjects. The school makes good use of staffing funded by specific grants to promote the very good positive and supportive ethos which is a major strength of the school. The number of classroom assistants and other teaching support staff is large, as appropriate for a school with a high proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language and a base for autistic pupils. They provide good support to pupils. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator does not teach pupils with special educational needs or work alongside main stream teachers and learning support assistants to develop inclusive practices. Learning support teachers do not have sufficient training to ensure that their approaches are appropriate for small groups of pupils with special educational needs.

55. The school has rigorous self-review processes and has gained the Investors in People award. Procedures for the implementation of the new statutory requirements for performance management are properly in place. The newly qualified teachers have a mentor who is part of the senior management team. There is a weekly programme of support. Currently two trainee teachers are working in the school.
56. Learning resources are good overall and very good in several subjects, for example English, music and religious education. The nursery, special education needs and autistic resource base are also well resourced. The library, however, has insufficient good quality fiction and non-fiction books. Staff use the resources well and some with considerable imagination, which stimulates pupils' learning. The accommodation is satisfactory and generally does not impose any restriction in any area of the national curriculum. The accommodation for the special educational needs provision is good. Although the building is large and has many auxiliary areas such as the music room, computer suites and parents' room, decoration is poor in several places such as the stairs, which creates a rather drab and unkempt impression. Other areas such as the brightly painted new toilet block and the halls that have been redecorated show the potential for improvement, but the multi-storey layout will always impose limitations. At present, the building is impractical for pupils in wheelchairs. The school lacks a field and the playground can only be used for ball games with care. Other arrangements have been made for games and, from the evidence of the prowess of the all-conquering football team, are successful.
57. The school has good systems for financial planning. It wisely secured the services of an external financial advisor to improve the systems of monitoring and control. As planned it has now extended and strengthened this by the appointment of a finance and administration officer who has rapidly improved the school's capacity for managing its very large budget. The senior management team uses the systems effectively and provide good information for the finance committee. Governors have a good basis on which to take informed decisions about spending. For example, the school has compared patterns of spending over several years and identified savings. The planned carry forward was used to complete the extensive building work that included the much appreciated new toilets. They ensure they receive value for money and use outside sources to provide evidence for compensation claims when work is not of an acceptable quality. The school has spent prudently its additional funding for special needs and English as an additional language. It has invested wisely in the provision and training of support staff. The additional funds gained through the success of bids have been used well to enhance the provision yet keep the school firmly in the direction of its school improvement plan. The governors apply the principles of best value. As yet the school does not compare its spending patterns with other schools. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. continue to raise standards in English and mathematics. Paragraphs 1-3, 76-94
2. amend the timetable in order to use time more efficiently by:
reviewing time allocation to subjects and the pattern of the learning day for the pupils within lessons and throughout the day; Paragraphs 24, 112
3. improve the quality and consistency of teaching in order that class teaching more closely matches the learning needs of different groups of pupils particularly the higher attainers and those with English as an additional language by:
 - using the good assessments to amend plans
 - increasing the range and variety of teaching methods and independent work; Paragraphs 14-21, 25, 61, 84-85, 91, 113, 118
4. further improve the monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching so that there is rigorous feedback and clear action to improve teaching and spread good practice; Paragraphs 69, 93, 99, 119, 133
5. raise attendance levels by rigorous use of data analysis and persistence with existing good procedures. Paragraph 38

Less important weaknesses to consider for inclusion in the action plan are:

- standards and leadership of art; Paragraphs 100-102
- the school improvement plan lacks rigorous criteria to identify how successful the action has been in terms of outcomes related to costs. Paragraph 50

AUTISTIC RESOURCE BASE

58. Since the last inspection the school has established a resource base for pupils with autism. This provision and the way that all pupils, whatever their individual needs, are included in all aspects of the life of the school are strengths. The local education authority refers the pupils to the resource base and there are currently 10 pupils attending, which is the maximum number for the provision.
59. The achievements and progress of the pupils who attend the resource base are good and some pupils make excellent progress. They achieve very well at the beginning to overcome their extreme difficulties with communication, forming relationships and managing their own behaviour. They learn to use Makaton signs, symbols and simple language to make their needs known and to learn about the routines of the day. For example, in a Picture Exchange Communication System lesson, some pupils choose between two interactive toys and learn to reach out and take the one they have chosen. Others have developed their language from a starting point of very little communication or understanding, to be able to use their imagination with language and play in a structured session with the speech therapist. They use little people and enact their school day, using appropriate short phrases, such as 'packed lunch' or 'school dinner'. They make very good progress in learning to behave in an appropriate way supported by the excellent strategies used by the staff. They also make very good progress in National Curriculum subjects. For example, in music they play large xylophones in the correct rhythm as an accompaniment to the teacher's singing.
60. The pupils' attitudes are very good and they show their enjoyment. For example, in an art lesson they brush glue on pots calmly and rhythmically, humming and singing quietly to themselves. For short periods they concentrate very hard. For example, within music there are several times when they become very still and listen to the music with intense involvement. Considering the severity and complexity of their difficulties their behaviour is also very good. They overcome their fears, such as putting on an apron in art and sit for short periods with the other pupils working peacefully.
61. The teaching and learning are very good and there are some excellent lessons. The management of the pupils' behaviour by the whole team is excellent. They remain calm and are clear about strategies and consistent in their language, responses and instructions to pupils. They assist each other if pupils' behaviour becomes difficult to manage. This means that pupils get the optimum opportunity to learn from the carefully structured and extremely well planned lessons. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. The learning support assistants are an integral part of the team. They work with pupils on individual programmes and support in the group work. The knowledge of the whole team in supporting pupils with autism is excellent. Main stream teachers manage the inclusion of pupils from the resource base well. For example, teachers support pupils to be part of the lesson and their classmates frequently ignore potentially disruptive noises and actions. On occasions pupils remain within the class when they might be disrupting the learning of other pupils. Teachers would benefit from a whole school approach on the rationale for a range of times when pupils remain in classes or should be withdrawn. This could include working with teachers and learning support assistants on ways of reducing dependency between pupils and learning support assistants, such as having support attached to subjects and classes, rather than to individual pupils.
62. The curriculum organised by the resource base is excellent. It is very carefully planned to provide each pupil with an individual timetable that reflects the exact balance of experiences they need. The written curriculum of approaches used within the base is excellent and includes the Picture Exchange Communication System, social skills approaches, body awareness, exercise and relaxation and intensive interaction and the

management of pupils who display autistic behaviours. There are very good assessment procedures to identify the pupils' exact difficulties and needs and these are carefully matched to programmes of work and learning situations. There are simple, clear, effective and workable recording systems. Good annotation clearly shows how much, or little, help pupils received when they have completed pieces of work.

63. The partnership with parents who attend the resource base is very good. A parents' group has been set up and at a recent workshop they explored materials for teaching literacy. A home-school book provides a valuable link on a daily basis. This enables the parents to know what their child has done at school. The impact of the school on pupils' learning at home and the school's ability to learn from how the pupils experience home life could be greatly enhanced if the teachers and therapists had more time to make home visits. This is very important for pupils with a complexity of needs to ensure that they get maximum learning opportunities both at home and at school.
64. The leadership and management are very good and there is a clear vision for developing the provision with appropriate priorities to achieve goals. The team works together very closely and creates a consistency of shared and agreed approaches. Learning support assistants are empowered by a system where they are a valued part of the team and given the opportunity to manage pupils' autistic behaviours on their own, requesting help when they feel they need it. There are difficulties created at times by insufficient staff which impacts on the smooth running of the base. Some opportunities are lost for the mainstream classes to benefit from the experience and expertise of the base staff and develop inclusive practices. In addition there is an impact on the delivery of the curriculum.
65. The experience and quality of the staff are very good, but the number to ensure that the excellent standards can be maintained in the event of absence or recruitment problems is unsatisfactory. Input by the speech and language therapist is excellent. However, the amount of time available to the resource base has reduced since the resource base opened. The training provided for all staff within the resource base is very good and this includes the opportunity to watch teachers and be taught particular strategies for working with the pupils. These include working with their communication skills and on managing their behaviour.
66. The accommodation is very good, with a soft play area and a sensory room, in addition to a large class area, that can be used for classes or groups. There are individual booths to restrict an overload of external stimulus. Resources are very good and are very effectively and efficiently used and organised.
67. The resource base enhances the school's opportunities and success in including pupils with complex needs into the community and helps all pupils in developing their spiritual, moral, social and personal skills. Pupils from the resource base attend registration, lunch, play times and some lessons with their peers. Some excellent strategies are employed to extend the interaction between the autistic pupils and other pupils in their class. For example, friends come and play in the soft play area in the resource base in a carefully structured time. Pupils play alongside each other and begin to form relationships. During the week of the inspection four pupils talked to inspectors about their experience of forming a 'Circle of Friends' with a pupil from the resource base. They explained how much they enjoyed playing with him, sitting next to him in class, at dinner and going swimming with him. One pupil said: 'When you help someone, you feel happy'. They say how much they miss him now he has left the school and how they can't wait to become a 'Circle of Friends' with another pupil.
68. The school identifies clearly the resource base budget and has transferred extra funds in recognition of the benefits the school gains. The school does not always have the

opportunity to meet new pupils and their parents. Therefore they are unable to assess the child's needs balanced against existing pupils with autism in different year groups. This would enable the school to make an informed decision on the appropriateness of offering a place in the school. For example, the school is currently expected to increase the number of pupils to 11, when the base is for a maximum of 10 pupils. This could jeopardise the smooth running of the provision.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	98
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	112

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	18	28	44	4	1	0
Percentage	3	18	29	45	4	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y R – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	56	494
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	208

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	145

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	324

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	94
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	128

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	34	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	24	31
	Girls	30	30	33
	Total	58	54	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (80)	81 (75)	96 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	32	29
	Girls	28	33	30
	Total	56	65	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (76)	97 (89)	88 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	30	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	22	29
	Girls	18	21	29
	Total	36	43	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (51)	65 (61)	88 (58)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	26
	Girls	17	22	21
	Total	36	43	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (47)	65 (65)	71 (60)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	67
Black – African heritage	86
Black – other	0
Indian	92
Pakistani	38
Bangladeshi	48
Chinese	5
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	1
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	573

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	1,751,464
Total expenditure	1,647,283
Expenditure per pupil	2,995
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,945
Balance carried forward to next year	107,126

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 12.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	550
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	32	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	28	0	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	41	15	3	5
The teaching is good.	66	29	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	34	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	23	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	57	37	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	29	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	40	3	0	3

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Most children make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development. They are happy to come to school and feel safe and secure in the well-established, orderly systems and routines of the nursery. Adults constantly affirm and praise positive behaviour and correct responses to questions and as a result, children are eager to please. They know what is expected of them and learn to respond well to the clear directions and instructions from adults. Teachers encourage children to tidy up after activities and they put resources away in the right place. With help, children are learning to take responsibility for themselves and their belongings. They enjoy taking turns to give out the milk and fruit at break times and know that they should say 'please' and 'thank you' at appropriate times. Many still need guidance when changing for physical activity and wait for assistance before putting on coats or shoes. Poor language skills prevent children from negotiating with one another at times and a few need adult support to resolve disputes. The majority behave well. Children maintain concentration well and sit quietly during their reading and writing activities. They are willing to take turns and know they must put up their hands before they speak in a group. In the playground, well-chosen wheeled vehicles provide very good opportunities for children to learn to share and co-operate with one another. They give one another lifts and wait patiently at the 'bus stop' until it is their turn for a ride on a car or a tricycle. There is a good balance in the nursery between children choosing their own activities and those directed by teachers and other adults. Teachers in the reception are less successful at encouraging children to make independent choices or decisions and there is sometimes too much teacher direction.

Communication, language and literacy

70. The initial assessments carried out by teachers show a wide spread of attainment in language. The majority of children enter the nursery with poorly developed language and literacy skills. Of these, many are at the early stages of learning to speak English because it is their second language. Children listen attentively to good introductions to the day's activities from adults, who provide very good models for spoken language. They develop children's vocabulary well, frequently asking questions and initiating conversations. In the best teaching, in the nursery, adults know when to involve themselves with children's play. The most able children have the confidence to make spontaneous remarks but many have a limited vocabulary and very low levels of language development with which to express themselves. The youngest need much encouragement to contribute and respond to questions with gestures or single words and short phrases. The most able are keen to talk about their own experiences and engage in conversations during their role play activities. However, the majority do not often initiate conversations or negotiate plans and activities with others. In reception, a few are already early readers, recognising many familiar words in their group reading books. They take delight in recognising sounds brought out of a special bag by puppets such as 's' for spider. More able children enjoy listening to stories on tapes and following the text with good levels of understanding of how a book works. They concentrate well. The majority learn to handle books with respect. Children mostly have immature grips when they use crayons and pencils but frequent opportunities in the nursery to experiment with a good range of writing materials ensure good progress. They draw pictures and round objects, developing their pencil control well. In one particular instance, a child with little English establishes through nods and gestures and with lots of adult encouragement that her picture is her 'daddy'. She makes very good progress in communication in a short time. In spite of some good progress, because of their low attainment on entry, children reach levels below those expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. There is a very clear purpose for the carefully planned activities and adults use the structure of the literacy hour framework effectively to introduce children to sounds and letters. Teachers in reception are not yet comfortable with the

new procedures. This affects the quality of teaching and introductions to lessons are sometimes rather rushed as a result. Teaching is sound in reception where teachers take notice of how children are responding and adapt accordingly. For example, in one group, the teacher altered her planned lesson on exploring children's senses using a 'feely box' because children lacked the necessary vocabulary to describe the objects. On other occasions, however, teachers carry on asking children to identify sounds they already know. Group activities are not sufficiently matched to children's level of understanding, such as when able children continue to roll dice to match letters and pictures. They use puppets and resources too frequently and even the frog 'Croaker' fails to stimulate sufficient interest or enjoyment. As a result, little new learning takes place.

Mathematical development

71. In the nursery, children show limited knowledge of numbers and counting skills and have low levels of number vocabulary. There is a well-organised structured programme of number activities. It involves all children effectively by using a colourful and stimulating range of resources. Teaching is good and the majority of children learn to match, count and order numbers to five at a good rate. In the nursery, adults reinforce mathematical vocabulary and understanding effectively. They model positional language, 'next', 'behind' and 'on top' and employ good questioning, such as 'Shall we put a square in each corner?' Children develop a basic understanding of the principles of addition and subtraction and an idea of 'more' and 'less.' With adult help, children begin to record their findings in workbooks, such as measurements of their own feet, using centimetre counting cubes and squared paper. By the end of the reception most children recognise a few numbers up to ten, matching groups of objects correctly to symbols and accurately putting numbers in order. They make good progress in counting, sequencing and ordering numbers. However, in reception classes teachers do not take sufficient advantage of opportunities for children to relate their learning to relevant practical activities on a regular basis. As a result, children do not find it easy to relate their knowledge of mathematical ideas and methods to solve everyday practical problems. They reach standards below those expected of the age group.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children talk about themselves, their families and where they live. Few, however, know when their birthdays are, or their addresses and show below average levels of general knowledge. The majority are not sufficiently confident in investigating, finding things out for themselves, or in asking questions. Children benefit from exposure to a wide range of cultures and beliefs and gain good levels of knowledge and understanding as a result. They enjoy an interesting and varied programme, enjoying visits such as one from the fire service. In the nursery, children draw pictures of the fireman and the fire engine under the topic of 'People who help us'. They grow their own cress seeds and examine small living creatures. When they make sweets for Diwali, children use their senses to extend their knowledge and understanding of colour, shape and texture. Good teaching develops children's vocabulary and language very well. In reception classes they continue to experience a variety of activities, gaining a suitable knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They are suitably prepared for the subjects of the National Curriculum. Children of all abilities are learning to use the mouse and the keyboard independently, with increasing confidence, developing skills in information and communication technology. A particularly able boy changes colours and shapes competently, whilst a girl enjoys making Rangoli patterns. They find out about their environment through a range of visits to places of interest. For example, children visit the local shops. This activity loses some spontaneity, however, and teaching fails to motivate children sufficiently, as this is part of a carousel of activities that each group carries out in succession.

Physical development

73. Children reach the expectations of the age group in physical development because of frequent and regular opportunities to use a wide range of small and large equipment. Teaching is good and encourages children effectively to improve their skills by example and demonstration. It provides good opportunities for them to experiment and use their physical skills in a creative way. Children manoeuvre a range of sturdy wheeled toys round corners and obstacles with increasing control and co-ordination. They confidently find imaginative ways of moving and travelling along and around equipment, with an

increasing awareness of space. In weekly sessions in the hall, there are suitable opportunities for prolonged vigorous exercise. Children run, jump, hop and skip for short periods of time, their agility and co-ordination are well developed for their age. They use their hands and feet to control a ball and stop and start with increasing levels of confidence and skill. Children benefit from regular opportunities to develop climbing and balancing skills on an appropriate variety of equipment. By the time they reach the end of the reception class, children handle a wide range of tools, such as pencils and crayons, scissors, brushes and glue spreaders and small equipment with suitable dexterity.

Creative development

74. Children meet the early learning goals³ in creative development by the time they reach the end of reception. In the nursery, children make very good progress in participating in role-play, enthusiastically pretending to be the bus driver or passengers on a bus. Motivated by good teaching in this area and by very good provision of resources, children become engrossed in a fantasy world. They choose to go to the zoo instead of the teacher's suggestion of the shops, showing good levels of imagination and confidence. They experience a wide range of materials and media and use colour, texture, form and shape to create pictures and models individually and as a group. Painting activities are accessible on planned occasions but not readily available for children to use independently. They carry out most activities under close adult supervision and guidance with a finished outcome in mind. For example, children make Diwali lamps at an appropriate time in the year. However, children produce the finished results as a result of close direction from the teacher and they have little chance to experiment or use their imaginations or creativity. Children enjoy some opportunities for role-play. Planning shows opportunities for responding to music through dance and all children participate in an annual production incorporating music and drama. Planning provides a suitable variety of experiences over time but teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings through art, music and role-play on a regular basis. There is an element of over direction by adults that at times limits the development of imagination, creativity and free expression for the older children.

³ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

ENGLISH

75. In the national tests and assessments in 2001 pupils' overall standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with the national averages in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools they were well above in reading and above in writing. This represents a considerable improvement from the last inspection when pupils' standards were found to be well below average in comparison with schools nationally and those in similar circumstances. Pupils attaining the higher Level 3 were comparable with the national average and well above the average attained by similar schools. The finding of the inspection confirms that these standards are being maintained.
76. At the end of Key Stage 2 in the national tests in 2001 pupils' results were well below those expected nationally. In comparison with similar schools pupils' attainment was below the average. These results are similar to those found at the last inspection. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or above has steadily improved from 38 per cent to 55 per cent since 1996. The school has set targets for a further raising of standards in 2002. Higher attaining pupils achieved results that were comparable with national averages and those of similar schools. The inspection finds that current pupils' overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below national expectation in reading, and well below in writing. Girls' attainment is significantly higher than boys'. In speaking and listening, pupils' standards are average. A small number of higher attaining pupils reach standards in reading and writing which are at least at the higher Level 5.
77. Pupils enter the school with very low standards of attainment. During Key Stage 1 they make good progress in all aspects of English. The school has identified the improvement of pupils' speaking skills as a means of developing their writing and reading. Pupils are taught to answer questions in complete sentences and to extend their answers wherever possible. For example, following a story about a gardener, pupils described well what an allotment was. For most it was a new word. In a good link with their 'healthy living' work in science, pupils talked at length about vegetables and fruit, saying why they are good to eat. Teachers help pupils' understanding and use of language well in careful and expressive reading of stories to the pupils. For example, in reading 'The Three Little Pigs', the teacher dramatises the story so that younger pupils successfully choose words to describe the wolf and read his words in an appropriate tone.
78. Year 6 pupils considering journalistic writing, read aloud newspaper articles. In discussing their contents, the pupils are eager to offer opinions, but display limited vocabulary. The teacher had to ask a number of questions before the pupils could work out the meaning of 'inactivity'. In a good question and answer session, other pupils discussed the changes in the meaning of words by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Across the key stage pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. The school provides a high level of support for pupils whose first language is not English and those with special educational needs. This enables these pupils to make good progress along with their peers. However, support assistants do not always help pupils sufficiently to understand the introductory sections of lessons. Occasionally in group work they do not simplify their language to ensure the understanding of pupils in the early stages of acquiring English. The very good relationships in the classroom aid learning well. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other.
79. Pupils make good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2. Well organised teaching in Year 1 promotes pupils' linking of letters and sounds so that most are able to tackle unfamiliar words with some confidence. Reading books are colour coded to ensure pupils' progress. In Year 2 pupils of average and higher attainment read appropriately graded books easily. They show good awareness of punctuation marks and read dialogue with expression. Systematic teaching of letter combinations in words helps pupils to recognise

a good range and confidently to attempt less familiar words. Pupils recall what they have read in detail and have a satisfactory knowledge of book features such as author, illustrator, index and title. Pupils whose first language is not English, and those with special educational needs receive good support and make sound progress.

80. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress in reading is slower and their achievement is below the expected standard. The principal reason for this amongst pupils of average attainment and below is that although they read words correctly, their limited vocabulary restricts their understanding of their meaning. Pupils of all ages are sometimes careless in their reading, guessing at words in their anxiety to press on. Despite these weaknesses pupils are also capable of reading with good expression and appreciation of the text. The small group of pupils in the extension class are able readers and discuss texts with a high degree of understanding and insight. Many pupils said that they read their own and school books at home, naming their favourite authors and books and giving good reasons. Some also belonged to local libraries and knew how to find fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils throughout the school do not have reading diaries to involve parents in their reading.
81. Pupils' writing at the end Year 2 is satisfactory and they make good progress over the key stage. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 write correct sentences using full stops and capital letters. Their spelling of basic words is good and handwriting satisfactory. They successfully transfer their writing skills to science and geography topics. Pupils of average and lower attainment write recognisable words and letters and copy sentences successfully. Year 2 pupils satisfactorily build on their work in Year 1. Pupils of average attainment show imaginative ideas such as 'I want to live in a lighthouse'. They link sentences to form a narrative. Pupils of above average attainment develop their writing beyond simple sentences. They are beginning to write stories. A pupil with English as an additional language makes good progress. She writes properly constructed and punctuated sentences with a developing vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in shaping letters and writing words. However, overall the presentation of pupils' work is often unsatisfactory with pupils taking insufficient care with the size and spacing of their writing.
82. At age 11 there is a very wide range of attainment in writing. Pupils in the extension class achieve a very high quality of writing. One or two gifted pupils' writing is beyond Level 5 in the maturity of ideas and their expression in individual and well-developed styles. These pupils write reviews, descriptive prose, poems and plays. They clearly enjoy the challenge of writing. Other pupils produce a good quantity of writing but limited progress across the key stage means that their vocabulary is restricted, sentences are often incomplete, punctuation is poor and there is little individuality in their writing. Pupils build satisfactorily on their achievement in Key Stage 1 tests in Year 3 but progress slows in Year 4 where there is insufficient emphasis on extended writing. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to support and extend pupils' learning in class. Pupils' presentation of their work is frequently careless and they do not sufficiently transfer the good progress made in handwriting lessons and books to their written work. Many pupils are still using a printing style. Ugly scoring out of mistakes is frequent and teachers do not comment on this sufficiently. Some pupils have used information and communication technology to produce their finished written work using appropriate fonts and size. The use of information and communication technology to develop and support pupils' writing is inconsistent across the key stage.
83. Teaching in nine tenths of the lessons observed was satisfactory or better, half was good or better and one third was very good. The unsatisfactory and poor lessons observed occurred in group lessons outside the mainstream classes. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and it is helping to raise the overall standards of pupils' reading and writing. Teachers' planning of the literacy hour is good. Planning of the

week's work shows clear objectives and the development of particular skills in reading and writing. A good feature of planning is teachers' evaluation of their success in overtaking the objectives. Further lessons in creative writing in Key Stage 2 are insufficiently different in style and format from the literacy hour to stimulate pupils fully into developing their extended writing. Teaching is mostly well matched to pupils' differing needs although in some lessons observed higher attaining pupils were insufficiently stretched.

84. The good relationships between teachers and pupils motivate pupils well. The vast majority try their best and maintain concentration well throughout the hour. In a number of lessons teachers' introductions were too long, resulting in insufficient time for pupils to complete tasks and discuss them at the end of the lesson. In some lessons teachers do not press pupils' learning on with sufficient urgency. The school has a positive policy of marking. Most teachers' marking is good, offering useful comments to pupils about how they can improve their work. There is, however, some inconsistency in the marking. The school has a good system of assessment procedures. In addition to teachers' recorded monitoring of pupils' work they also use a range of spelling, reading and writing tests. Teachers use the information from these to track individual pupils' attainment and progress, to predict pupils' performance in national tests and to target support to meet pupils' needs. The school does not yet use assessment information sufficiently to modify teachers' planning where appropriate.
85. The school works very hard to succeed in raising standards of pupils' literacy. Particularly in Key Stage 2, severe problems are posed by the high absence rate of some pupils, the arrival and departure of many pupils within a short time, and the significant number of pupils with a low understanding of spoken English. The school's inclusive policy also means that it accepts pupils from other schools with low attainment and self-esteem. The very good strategies to compensate for these difficulties include the high number and targeted deployment of support staff, the Additional Literacy Support scheme, out-of-school booster classes and the Saturday morning 'Shine Academy'. Another significant feature in the improvement of pupils' literacy skills is the classes in English for parents for whom English is a second language.

MATHEMATICS

86. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment in mathematics have been rising and have improved significantly throughout the school. In the 2001 national tests for 7-year-olds, pupils' attainment was average when compared to all schools nationally. Their attainment is well above average when compared to similar schools. These results are a significant achievement and show a gradual trend of improvement over the past five years.
87. The national test results for 11-year-olds in 2001 show attainment to be below the national average. Compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment is above average. This is an improvement on the previous year and maintains the improving trend over recent years. These results have to be viewed in the context of the school; for example, there are a significant number of pupils who did not start school in the infant classes and for whom English is an additional language. Some pupils who started lower down in the school left before the end of Year 6. Statistical data, giving evidence of pupils' achievements over time, shows that the pupils in Year 6 who have come through the school are achieving well. Many of the pupils who receive extra support, because of their additional educational and language needs, achieve well. However, although the majority of pupils are making satisfactory gains in their learning, some are capable of achieving the higher Level 5 standard. In several classes, the planning and teaching is not good enough to extend or challenge the higher attainers. The recent appointment of a teacher

for gifted and talented pupils is helping to raise standards and having a positive effect on curriculum development for the higher attainers, particularly in Year 6.

88. Inspection evidence confirmed rising standards and found attainment to be close to the national average at the age of 7 and below average at the age of 11. For the pupils in Years 1 and 2, work concentrates upon developing number skills such as addition, subtraction, number patterns, shape and odd and even numbers. The work gradually becomes more challenging and by the time pupils reach the age of 7 most are achieving well in terms of basic numeracy work. Their mathematical language improves and they become familiar with the meaning of words such as 'more' and 'less' and 'large' and 'small'. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher used the mental arithmetic session to develop pupils' subtraction skills. She asked questions and the pupils wrote down the number sum and answer on their white boards. When they held up their boards, she assessed which pupils could write down the sums correctly and get the correct answers. Where lessons are planned well, the pupils receive work that is matched to their abilities. For example, in a good lesson, in another Year 2 class, pupils were learning about multiples of two. The teacher asked questions such as, 'What do you notice about all the answers in the two times table?' and 'What do you think?' This enabled good teaching to take place about even and odd numbers. Higher attainers noticed the pattern in the numbers whilst the worksheets for lower attainers helped them to understand the concept of multiplication and to reinforce multiples of two.
89. In a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher established expectations of pupils' behaviour from the start, so that all pupils were ready to start and concentrate on the mental arithmetic session - multiplying by 10. The good use of resources such as a place value chart, number line and hundreds board were very helpful in reinforcing number facts up to 100. By way of contrast, in a Year 4 class the use of visual materials for pupils who were not learning would have helped them to participate more fully in the lesson. Pupils in Year 5 discussed estimating and measuring different lengths and distances. The higher attainers knew that large distances could be measured using a trundle wheel but unfortunately none was available for demonstration purposes. More practical work would have enhanced this lesson and helped to increase pupils' learning and accuracy when estimating larger distances. In Year 6, the teacher effectively aroused the pupils' interest by using their personal experience of travelling overseas. For example, the pupils' compared analogue and digital times of places abroad to the time in London. This was a good example of using numeracy to extend pupils' geographical skills as they discussed the reasons for time zones and the rotation of the earth on its axis. In an information and communication technology lesson, pupils' numeracy skills were used well to program a floor robot to travel over a given distance. The teacher with responsibility for gifted and talented pupils worked a Year 6 group of higher attaining pupils very hard. They were set very appropriate mental arithmetic sums such as doubling very large numbers and being given a few seconds to work out the answers. The main focus of the lesson was to work out problems involving units of measure. Pupils concentrated hard and were very keen to complete the tasks and then check their answers using a calculator. There was a sense of healthy competition to the lesson and extension work was set for homework.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. A significant proportion of good teaching was seen, but there was no very good teaching observed in mathematics. In several classes, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. Although these sessions reinforce past learning and introduce the main focus of the lesson, some went on for 40 minutes or more. When this happens, it tends to lead to restless behaviour and then pupils lose their concentration. The introduction to lessons needs to be sharper. In a few lessons, the pace of learning was affected because the management of pupils was not strong enough. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed marking in some classes was good and informed pupils about the next stage of learning but in others, it was too cursory.

91. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed a particular area of weakness is using and applying mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum. Other weak areas in the curriculum are the handling of data and problem solving. Some pupils have poor reading skills and therefore have difficulty in understanding what the problems are asking them to find out. The use of information and communication technology is not well established; it was rarely seen being used during the inspection and there was little evidence found in pupils' books. The assessment procedures in mathematics are very good but data, to extend higher attaining pupils in all classes, is not being used effectively enough. However, some good, recent initiatives, such as setting at Key Stage 2, the booster classes and the teacher for gifted pupils are all helping to raise standards of attainment.
92. The co-ordination of mathematics is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the monitoring of teaching and learning has improved and standards are rising. However, the observations of lessons need to be clearer about what teachers should do to improve the quality of their teaching. The school uses classroom support assistants effectively in the subject. Most have clearly defined roles and work closely with the teachers.
93. There has been satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. The rising trend in standards is particularly pleasing.

SCIENCE

94. Pupils at ages 7 and 11 attain standards that are consistent with the national average. Good quality teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 prepare pupils well for learning in the junior classes. Teachers' emphasis on science investigations and pupils' good attitude to learning help them to achieve well. In lessons girls perform as well as the boys. From 1999 onwards, pupils' performance and achievement in the Key Stage 2 tests have improved steeply. Effective support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs help them to make good progress. Pupils' standards in scientific enquiry have improved since the last inspection.
95. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in investigative science are average and slightly better than other areas of science. They observe and classify man-made and natural materials and describe their properties using appropriate vocabulary. Higher attainers explore, understand and record the quickening effect of exercise on heartbeat. Most pupils understand that fish, bananas and carrots are examples of healthy food.
96. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that a pond, desert and soil are examples of different habitats and that plants and animals that are found in these have special adaptations. For example, the fish has fins and the cactus has special leaves and stem. Higher attainers have a better understanding of these; for example, the fish has gills for breathing in water. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good investigative skills. They plan how to conduct experiments such as separating a mixture of sand, peas and salt. They select appropriate equipment and carry out experiments fairly accurately. They know how to make investigations fair. Higher attainers explain their conclusions, for example, of the effect of temperature on the growth of yeast. They state that cold water prevents it from being active. In lukewarm water, it is very active and gives off 'carbon dioxide which filled the bottle and the balloon'. Average attaining pupils are far less clear in their explanations, for example, 'the warm water has risen because the yeast has been eating the sugar'. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language have difficulty in understanding and expressing their ideas in science. For example, they link jumbled up statements with terms such as bacteria, spore, decomposers, infect, microbe and mould. Standards in other areas of science are sound. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers. They co-operate well in groups. They share and use materials and equipment

responsibly. Their good attitude, respect for teachers, adults and other pupils help them to learn and achieve well.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6, it is satisfactory. The overall quality is satisfactory. In the infant classes, effective planning, good structure and organisation of lessons and good management of pupils make lessons purposeful and efficient for learning. Demonstrations and use of scientific vocabulary, for example, of properties of materials such as twisting, bending, stretching and squashing are very effective in helping all pupils to learn. This includes pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. There was excellent team teaching in one lesson. Combined with good demonstration and appropriate use of vocabulary, it promoted simultaneous acquisition of language and learning of science. Such lessons help many additional language learners to reach standards that are average at age 7 years. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is less consistent than in the infant classes. However, it is never less than satisfactory. In one very good lesson, the pupils developed very good enquiry skills in separating a mixture of sand, salt and peas that required sieving, filtering and evaporation. The opening discussion built on pupils' daily experience, for example separating tea leaves from brewed tea. The pupils were then asked to match key ideas such as sieving, decanting, filtering, evaporation and condensation with their explanations. This ensured that pupils' understood what these processes meant and enabled pupils to use this information for their investigation on separating the given mixture. Pupils were asked to work in groups of three or four and discuss, agree and write down what they would do and what they would need. Pupils were then instructed to carry out the experiment. The teacher set high expectations of work ethics and quality of learning. Sharing of objectives and discussions ensured that all pupils knew what to do sensibly and productively. In some lessons, teachers could do more to develop pupils' language. Summing up could be more effective in relation to the set learning intentions. Good management, respect and relationships are strong features of most lessons. These factors create a good atmosphere for all pupils to learn and make progress. In some lessons, different ways of recording work help all pupils to learn well and make good progress.
98. Leadership and management of science are good. The school has set challenging targets for the period from 2000 to 2005 for Level 4 and above and Level 5 and above, subject to mobility of pupils. The co-ordinator needs to know more about what is going on in Years 3 to 6 by monitoring curriculum plans and pupils' work and there is need for improvement in monitoring of teaching. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for updating the subject policy to include the National Curriculum 2000 and the requirement for inclusion of all pupils in effective learning.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Standards in art in Years 2 and 6 are below those expected by pupils of this age. This judgement is based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, conversations with teachers and the subject co-ordinator. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection; it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. There are a few examples where pupils attain standards around the national expectation, for example the personal portraits displayed in Year 1 based on the work of Picasso and Van Gogh.
100. Although the pupils' work covers all the attainment targets in the National Curriculum, the work displayed showed that pupils use a limited range of media. Teachers' planning is constrained because of the change to a new scheme of work, with several teachers requiring further direction and guidance. In some classes, work is closely linked to other subjects, for example the paintings in Year 6 related to work about the Egyptians. Pupils learn to appreciate the work of great artists such as Rembrandt and Paul Klee. Their drawings and paintings show how they have tried to develop some of the artists'

techniques. In the one lesson observed, the teacher shared her experience of her dreams and explained to the pupils how difficult they are to interpret. This led successfully into a discussion about surrealist art and the effective use of the Internet to display examples of Magritte's work. The higher attaining pupil mentioned the paintings were similar to the abstract paintings of Picasso. The teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to explain the difference between abstract and surrealist art. The lesson succeeded because the pupils had listened carefully. In their pencil sketches, they attempted to develop their ideas in the surrealist style.

101. The co-ordination of art is unsatisfactory because pupils' achievements are lower than at the time of the last inspection. The displays around the school are not as good as in most other primary schools. There is a draft policy and a scheme of work although a great deal of work is required to implement it fully. Currently, no time is allocated for monitoring and some teachers are unsure about what they should be teaching. Other areas requiring improvement are assessment and the extension of the work in art using information and communication technology.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils attain satisfactory standards at the ages of 7 and 11. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection. They have a sound knowledge of the sequence of events in producing a design brief for their products. They know that evaluation of each stage is important in producing a successful finished article. There is a good balance between the teaching and learning of the twin elements, designing and making. Judgements are based on the observation of lessons, scrutiny of teachers' planning and talking to teachers and pupils.
103. A good feature of the lessons observed was the close links with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils in an infant class, designing and making sandwiches and salads, considered how these contributed to the healthy living topic in science. Clear labelling of salad ingredients was very useful to pupils whose first language is not English, enabling them to extend their vocabulary. Some pupils were able to taste vegetables they had not tried before. Year 2 pupils, evaluating sandwiches they had previously made, describe difficulties encountered, for example in cutting various ingredients. There was a good contribution to their literacy skills as they discussed healthy eating, and hygiene in the preparation of food. Pupils wrote their evaluations in sentences, including the names of ingredients read from the board. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in lessons and over time.
104. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are challenged to solve a problem of constructing a tower from given materials that will support a suspended 50 gram weight. This builds well on previous learning when pupils have designed and constructed bridge structures. Working in small groups, pupils discuss possible shapes for their structure and produce an outline design. Using the given materials, a limited number of straws and adhesive tape, they construct a variety of tower shapes ranging from pyramids to cylinders. Good discussion takes place as pupils evaluate the success of their structures, deciding what modifications and strengthening will be necessary. Other pupils consider the design of percussion instruments, linking well with their topic on sound in science, as well as instructional writing, and music. Pupils examine and discuss percussion instruments and decide on what they are going to make. Working in groups, they draw up a list of materials and the sequence of procedures needed to make their instrument. Some pupils use their musical knowledge to construct a xylophone, recognising that shorter bars will make higher sounds.
105. Pupils enjoy their work and are anxious to design and make a successful product. A good feature of their learning is their ability to work collaboratively. They discuss the

design stage sensibly and productively and share ideas, materials and equipment readily. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' overall progress, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, is sound.

106. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge and design interesting and challenging tasks for pupils. A good feature of their planning is the linking of the tasks with other subjects. Group discussions by pupils contribute well to the development of their speaking and listening. Teachers manage the lessons satisfactorily and give good encouragement to pupils. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and successful outcomes to their work. One teacher made good use of information and communication technology as she projected a computer-based sequence of the lessons' objectives and activities on to the whiteboard. Pupils are not yet using control technology in constructing programmable models.
107. Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows satisfactory coverage of the curriculum over the year, although the work involving levers, gears and pulleys is under-developed. Teachers design projects and tasks satisfactorily to develop pupils' skills.
108. Assessment sheets involving checklists of pupils' attainment have been designed as part of the school's assessment policy and procedures. Teachers' use of these, particularly to influence their planning, is not yet fully in place. The recently appointed co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning but has not yet had the opportunity to work alongside teachers. There are good resources for the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

109. During the inspection, due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe only two lessons, both in Year 4. Further evidence is based on pupils' work in the infant classes, teachers' planning and from discussion with teachers and pupils. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is average and similar to that found in other schools. No judgement on attainment was made at the time of the previous inspection, so no judgement can be made about improvement.
110. Pupils in Year 2 study their own surroundings and other localities in the United Kingdom. They have studied the Isle of Struay, linked with their literacy work. They acquire and use appropriate geographical vocabulary correctly, such as *jetty*, *mountains*, *mainland*, *bridge*, and plot routes from places identified on their maps such as from High Farm to the post office and shop. They describe human and physical features. They have identified types of transport appropriate for travel from their school to Struay. Year 1 pupils using a large scale wall map of the world have plotted their own holiday locations and their countries of origin, together with those of Barnaby the Bear, identifying warm and cold countries. They consider how Barnaby travels, noting, for example, that he walks to school, takes a bus to the shops and flies to Spain.
111. In the two lessons observed in Year 4, where pupils considered the use and supply of water in the world, attainment was less than satisfactory. Pupils spent too long on the carpet and too little time writing. Pupils spoken to from Year 6 showed a sound knowledge of continents, countries and capital cities of the world, climatic features, the water cycle and map symbols and co-ordinates. They had a clear understanding of lines of latitude and longitude and of climatic zones such as the tropics. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and higher attaining pupils, are achieving satisfactorily.
112. The teaching observed was satisfactory. In one class the teacher had made resource booklets. The format of directing pupils to certain pages through multiple choice questions held their interest and injected pace into the lesson. Planning sheets provide

for pupils of differing abilities. This is done in year groups, sharing staff expertise. In practice, however, teachers do not always provide adequately for higher attaining pupils and their expectations are sometimes insufficiently challenging. Too much reliance is placed on worksheets which many pupils for whom English is an additional language find hard to read and understand. Pupils are keen to learn and bring good attitudes to their lessons. The weak writing skills of many pupils hinder them when they take on written tasks.

113. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has been in post for a long time, has a good grasp of the subject and knows how to develop it. An improvement plan is presented to governors annually and forms the basis for the subject's development. A new policy and scheme of work have recently been introduced, and new study topics added such as water, and the Indian village of Chambokoli. Pupils undertake fieldwork and visits. Year 5 have a residential visit and Year 6 visit Kench Hill as part of their study of a contrasting locality within the United Kingdom. Assessment tasks are planned for the end of each topic but teachers' use of these is inconsistent. They use information and communication technology well to support the subject through programs such as 'MacGlobe' and 'Where in the world is Carmen Sandiego?' The subject supports pupils' social and cultural development well, through the study of other lands.

HISTORY

114. Standards of attainment in history are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and similar to those found in other schools. No judgement on attainment was made at the time of the previous inspection, so comparison cannot be made. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is a second language and most higher attaining pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily and making good progress in lessons.
115. Year 1 pupils create a timeline of old toys, in their study of Toys Old and New. Pupils in Year 2 learn about Florence Nightingale. Through the use of role play and dressing up as nurses and soldiers they gain good understanding of life in the hospital at Scutari and an awareness of issues of hygiene and disease. One above average pupil writes 'Florence Nightingale was a very famous person. She was the lady with the lamp. She was a nurse, too, and she was strict'. Another writes 'If it (the hospital ward) wasn't clean they would get germs and diseases'. Pupils know that more soldiers died in hospital than on the battlefield. They have a good understanding of differences between then and now, but are less secure about the chronology of the period.
116. Years 3 and 4 pupils in their local study of Old Hackney acquire new vocabulary from the Saxon period such as *burgh*, *wella*, *beck*, *borough* and *ley*. Year 5 pupils learning about the Victorian period know the differences between Victorian and modern-day transport. They make comparisons with other aspects such as education and the life of children from different social backgrounds. They use time lines well, for example to record a day in the life of a Victorian maid, and they have a satisfactory understanding of sequencing and chronology. They are aware of the events between 1833 – 1899. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of Ancient Egypt, its social pyramid, the importance of the Nile, and its farming calendar.
117. Teaching and learning overall are good throughout the school. Teachers stimulate their pupils who enjoy lessons and learn well across the school. In Year 2 the practice of encouraging pupils to preface their written observations with the phrase 'I can see...' is effective. A Year 6 lesson used the 'game' approach of 'Hotseat Questiontime'. Pupils played the role of an Egyptian farmer, pharaoh or scribe. This was very effective in developing good learning. Planning overall is good, and usually meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. However, there is too much reliance on worksheets in some

classes, and higher attaining pupils get insufficient opportunities to develop personal skills through individual research. Teachers generally manage pupils well. Pupils bring good attitudes to lessons, and enjoy the subject. However, their written work and the quality of presentation are sometimes less than satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of people and events from the past, but the use of artefacts to develop skills in historical enquiry is less well developed.

118. The subject provides good cross-curricular links with art and English, and strong links with personal health social and citizenship education and pupils' social development. Teachers make provision for assessment opportunities after each topic, but they do not always carry it out in practice, and monitoring of the subject is underdeveloped. Resources are satisfactory but there is need for further good quality artefacts. Teachers make insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support the subject. The present subject co-ordinator has been in post for only a few months, but has positive ideas for taking the subject forward through the subject improvement plan. There is a new policy and new scheme of work, following national guidelines. Planning is monitored, but insufficient observations of lessons have so far been made. Visits to places such as the Tower of London, Sutton House and local museums enhance the pupils' learning. The subject contributes positively to the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and to pupils' social development. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Pupils attain satisfactory standards at the end of both key stages. Standards have risen significantly since the equipping of the computer suite. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, are now making satisfactory progress in their lessons and over time. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' attainment was below national expectation. The school has addressed the issues raised in that report. The curriculum plan includes the use of modelling programs to explore real and simulated situations. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in control technology throughout the school.
120. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have developed satisfactory understanding of computer functions. All pupils make satisfactory progress. They are familiar with the principal icons on the toolbar and keys such as shift, use of backspace to delete and the space bar. They show good control of the mouse in moving the cursor and in clicking on and dragging. They confidently open their personal files using appropriate icons and drop-down menu. They successfully draw shapes such as rectangles and ellipses and fill them. Pupils understand how to save their work. Younger pupils learning to program a robot understand that they have to give instructions in the correct order. The teacher illustrates this by getting pupils to step forwards, back and sideways.
121. Year 6 pupils, working in pairs, copy magazine covers successfully using a graphics program. They use a layering technique confidently, combining several layers of text and pictures. The pupils understand and use correctly technical vocabulary such as 'import', 'textbox' and 'palette'. Pupils use the icons correctly to import different text and images. They change the size, font, colour and shape to complete their cover. All pairs in the class, including pupils with special educational needs, successfully create a magazine cover. In the final session pupils retrieve their work and project it on to the interactive whiteboard, explaining their procedures. Year 5 pupils are introduced to spreadsheets. They understand that they can use spreadsheets to solve mathematical problems by the use of cells. They learn how to open a spreadsheet program and to enter data into the cells. Younger pupils develop their knowledge of control technology through the use of a programmable robot. They successfully predict what shapes the robots will perform as a

result of their programming. Other pupils develop mapping skills for geography by devising routes and inserting markings on to a map of the local area.

122. Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory and in many cases good. The vast majority of pupils are familiar with computer functions. They know that computers can be used as a tool to perform a range of tasks which develop their learning in many fields. They work very well in pairs and small groups. They are anxious to learn and develop their understanding and use of computers. Their behaviour is usually good.
123. There is a range of expertise and confidence in teaching, although during the inspection the teaching observed was never less than satisfactory. In half the lessons it was good or very good. In the very good lessons teachers had a high level of expertise, they planned and managed lessons thoroughly, and most, if not all, pupils achieved the learning objectives. However, in lessons using a programmable robot teachers' organisation was less satisfactory in that some pupils found it difficult to see the robot and pick up what was being taught. Teachers get good support from an overall curriculum plan that covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the use of sensing equipment to monitor external events such as changes in light and temperature is not yet developed. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and success. Those whose expertise is still developing skilfully use pupils' knowledge to demonstrate techniques to other pupils. The teaching of computer skills shows good progression throughout the school. The use of these skills to support pupils' learning in other subjects is sporadic and under-developed. The good system of assessment has sheets designed for each unit to show what pupils have learned and can do. Teachers match their assessment of the development of pupils' skill against set criteria and targets. In a new development assessment is computerised for easy access. Since the establishment of the computer suite within the past two years and training through the New Opportunities Fund of all teachers, standards have risen significantly. All classes have a timetabled hour-long lesson in the suite each week. The recently appointed co-ordinator, supported by a local education authority consultant, has good plans for further improvement through wider use of information and communication technology across the curriculum and upgrading of the school's hardware and software. The well-supported computer club provides further opportunity for pupils to practise and refine their skills.

MUSIC

124. The skill and expertise of the school's specialist music co-ordinator is a significant factor in the above average standards achieved by the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11 years.
125. Pupils have very good opportunities during lessons to explore the rhythm, texture and timbre of music from a rich variety of styles and cultures, including African, Egyptian and Israeli. They listen appreciatively to music and experiment with sound, combining their knowledge and self-expression to good effect. Pupils of all abilities perform increasingly complex tunes together, using their voices and a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. They have a well-developed understanding of ensemble and increasing understanding of harmony. They have a secure knowledge of the pentatonic scale and use well practised hand signals to lead one another in playing and singing accurately pitched and well controlled notes. During group compositions they are confident to perform solo parts as singers, providing rhythmic support or a melody on the xylophone. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and timing, understanding the importance of pauses and silence. The development of their understanding of musical structure is very good. They know which sounds to put together. The teacher develops vocabulary well, frequently referring to technical terms, such as glissando and ritornello. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 pupils move rhythmically in concentric circles whilst listening to Vivaldi's 'Spring', stepping out to the rhythm of the bass note and listening in anticipation for the

next phrase, which they know will be repeated. This helps them to play their instruments with accuracy and with imagination and feeling for the mood of the composition. They work very well in their groups, showing high levels of awareness of the contribution of their individual efforts to the success of the whole. They recall details of composers' lives and personalities as a result of the interesting and knowledgeable information provided by the teacher. She refers to Vivaldi having created a 'number one hit' and frequently refers to his name and dates, bringing the composer to life for pupils.

126. The teaching is very good overall and, at times, excellent. The co-ordinator taught all lessons seen during the inspection. Class teachers teach their own classes on alternate weeks after observing the specialist teaching of the co-ordinator. This leads to increasing teacher confidence and skill in the subject. Lessons are very well structured with an interesting and challenging variety of very well-organised musical activities. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in warm up activities and remind themselves of specific skills learnt in previous lessons. They follow a carefully planned programme of work designed to build progressively on these skills. The youngest pupils learn to recognise a phrase through a combination of music and movement. They enjoy using hand movements to identify high and low notes when they sing a greeting to the teacher. By the end of Year 6, pupils compose a simple sequence using symbols to prompt a sound or action, developing an understanding of notation. Teaching has very high expectations of pupils' standards of performance and behaviour. The teacher firmly establishes good relationships and notices when pupils need extra support or encouragement. She successfully involves pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. As a result, they all participate in lessons with enormous enjoyment and a sense of achievement.
127. Pupils have a rich variety of opportunities to participate in musical activities both in lessons and after school. All pupils have opportunities to perform in concerts and assemblies and there is a school choir that sings at local venues, including homes for the elderly. A small group of pupils of all ages enjoy playing drums and dancing with the guidance of visiting musicians.
128. Lessons often take place in the school's music room at the very top of the school. This is a very good resource area, in spite of its remote position. Its atmosphere and individuality promote self-expression and creativity to a good extent. It is very well equipped for the age group, although the school has accurately identified the need to develop the resources for recording sound.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Judgements about the subject are based on observations of lessons in games, from looking at teachers' planning, and talking to teachers and pupils. It was not possible to see any lessons in dance, gymnastics or athletics. Standards of attainment in physical education at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and similar to those found in most other schools. Attainment in swimming is well above average, with nine out of ten pupils able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The previous inspection made no overall judgement about attainment but commented that pupils' performance was better than their planning and evaluation. The quality of evaluation has improved, but its use is inconsistent. Improvement overall, since the previous inspection, is satisfactory.
130. Pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school and very well in swimming. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is a second language, and those from the Autism Resource Base, working with their helpers, make sound progress. Year 1 and 2 pupils improved their games and their social skills through the use of a parachute. They were aware of safety issues when running and finding space and knew the importance and purpose of a warm-up session. They successfully

completed a 'mushroom', learning to synchronise their movements in order to make smaller and larger waves.

131. In Years 3 and 4 pupils used a variety of ways to prolong games of chasing and dodging, developing skills such as shoulder throws and chest passing. They were able to improve performance levels from their own observations. They showed good awareness of warm-up necessity - 'so as not to pull muscles' - and were good at finding appropriate space to work in. Year 5 pupils showed good manual ball control when developing throwing, catching and evasion skills whilst broadening their techniques for attack and defence. Year 6 pupils achieved very well in an intense half-hour session at the local swimming baths, with professional coaches. Distances and techniques were improved, and new strokes learned. One out of three pupils was able to swim over 25 metres, many of these swim 100 metres, and almost two out of three could swim 10 metres. Coaches confirmed the predictions of teachers that by the end of the school year over 95 per cent would achieve 25 metres – a slight improvement on the previous year.
132. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory overall throughout the school. One unsatisfactory lesson took place in a junior class, due to weak pupil management, incorrect dress from pupils and teacher and lack of evaluation, resulting in lack of progress. No good teaching, apart from swimming, was seen, confirming the view that some teachers lack confidence with the subject. Although teachers emphasise the need for warm-up sessions, and elements of safety, inspection reveals concerns about health, hygiene and safety. Too many pupils were observed inappropriately changed, or not changed, for their lessons. Too many have inappropriate footwear, or may be allowed to wear socks without shoes, raising safety concerns. Some teachers themselves are often not good role models in these areas. Teachers do not always make the best use of adult support staff to assist with class management. The use of pupils to demonstrate good practice, and opportunities given for evaluation of pupils' own performance and that of others, is also inconsistent. When pupils are playing organised games in the playground and concentrating on passing, throwing and evasion skills, there is considerable risk that they may collide with the brick pillars supporting the covered areas. Care should be taken to isolate these from activities. The very good teaching of swimming, with pupils correctly dressed, highly motivated, in three separate ability groups, ably supported by other adults, ensured very good learning and achievement in just one half-hour session.
133. The subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of the subject's needs and positive plans for taking the subject forward. She has identified the need to develop the provision for dance and outdoor adventurous activities. She has already been able to monitor lessons. Insufficient use is made of this monitoring, however, to ensure that recommendations from feedbacks are carried out, in order to raise standards in the subject. There are many good practices employed in teaching, but the use of these is inconsistent across the school. Indoor accommodation, where three halls are in regular use, is satisfactory. However, there are concerns of safety where pupils play games on the tarmac area outside, and the school has no grassed area. Despite this, the soccer team wins the local schools' competition regularly. The school makes good use of two local parks in the summer for athletics and sports days. Pupils play inter-school matches and compete with other schools in local swimming galas. There is very good extra-curricular provision for physical activities such as soccer, cricket, tennis, dance, basketball and judo. There are good arrangements for additional specialist coaching from parents and local soccer and tennis clubs, Capital Kids Cricket and Basketball London. There is good assessment for swimming with a task set at the end of each half-term. Other assessment is less effective. Resources for the subject are good and have been well organised by the co-ordinator. A new policy and scheme of work, following revised national guidelines, are in place. This provides for all elements of the subject, including outdoor activities and some orienteering. Planning for the subject is good, with provision for the needs of pupils of all abilities, but teachers give inconsistent consideration to this when teaching lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. The subject is very well organised and in a strong position in the school's curriculum because of committed and knowledgeable leadership and good teaching in both key stages. The school has successfully maintained the improvement commented on in the last inspection and pupils achieve good standards by the time they reach the age of 11 years.
135. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the main features of major world religions, understanding the significance of various symbols, stories and festivals in some depth. In Year 2, for example, pupils gain good understanding of the special significance of Hanukkah in Judaism. A pupil accurately recalls that it celebrates the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days. The teacher successfully creates a quiet and reflective atmosphere by her excellent story telling skills, good use of resources and the lighting of a candle. Pupils know that light is also important at other times, such as Christmas, Eid and Diwali and very good teaching reinforces pupils' knowledge effectively throughout the lesson. During discussions, Year 3 pupils show sound knowledge of the main characteristics of Christianity and understand the importance of Bible stories as a guide to help people to know right from wrong.
136. Teaching makes good use of a wide range of good quality resources, including videos. Pupils in Year 4 deepen their knowledge and understanding of Islam when they watch a video emphasising the importance in this religion of caring for living things. In a very good lesson they are encouraged to find synonyms for words to describe Allah, such as 'guide' and 'protector.' All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, achieve well. Pupils express their own beliefs with assurance and demonstrate a growing recognition and respect for those of different faiths. Year 6 pupils recall many significant features of Buddhism and are helped by the teacher's expert and challenging questioning skills to make links between other religions they have studied. When they examine the five moral precepts of Buddhism, for example, they make comparisons with the rules of the Ten Commandments in Christianity and the laws of Judaism in the Torah. Good teaching promotes lively discussion and debate. Pupils learn effectively from their knowledge and as a result, they are often reflective and make thoughtful contributions upon the implications for their own lives. They debate moral issues relevant to their own experiences, making good links between religious beliefs and stories and the way in which people live their lives. Pupils show interest and curiosity in different religions and are confident to ask and answer questions. They talk about their learning with awareness of the importance of religious beliefs and show an exceptional degree of understanding and respect for the beliefs of others. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
137. Pupils present their written work very well throughout the school. There is a good balance between the recording and copying of facts and independent writing and research by the time they reach the end of Year 6. There are particularly high standards of accuracy and presentation in a Year 2 class.
138. The school made a valued contribution to the development of the borough's agreed syllabus, which it closely follows. Planning is of a very high quality. A well-structured and detailed programme of work ensures continuing progress throughout the school and provides very good guidance for teachers. It effectively reinforces pupils' knowledge as they revisit topics in subsequent years.