

INSPECTION REPORT

CHARLES DICKENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lant Street, The Borough, London

LEA area: London Borough of Southwark

Unique reference number: 100781

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Owens

Reporting Inspector: Mr G S Bignell
1880

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 246081

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lant Street London
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andy Masheter
Date of previous inspection:	09/11/2003

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9779	Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
11341	Sean Lawlor	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Special educational needs	
1963	Sibani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Educational inclusion	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3574	Kanwaljit Singh	Team inspector	Science History Music Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Charles Dickens Primary School is situated in Southwark in South London. There are 305 pupils on roll, including full and part-time nursery children. The community served by the school is culturally and linguistically very diverse with English being an additional language for almost three-quarters of the children. About one-third of children are of African heritage, with other large groups being Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, White and mixed race. Boys outnumber girls in all years except Years 4 and 6 – in Year 3 there are three times more boys than girls. About 27 per cent of children are identified with special educational needs – this is above the national average. Eleven pupils have statements. The attainment of children on entry to the school is very mixed - many of those admitted during the year come in with lower attainment.

There are currently seven children from families seeking asylum. Nearly all pupils live locally and many are housed in nearby local authority estates. A significant number of pupils join and leave the school during their primary education – nearly a quarter either left or arrived during last year. The area suffers from high levels of deprivation. Over 40 per cent of children are entitled to free school meals – this is well over double the national average. The school exceeded its statutory achievement targets in 2002 and received an Achievement Award in 2002 and again in 2003. Recently, the school was also awarded *Arts Mark Gold* status. It is part of North Southwark Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, which enables all its pupils to do very well. The standards achieved are higher than might be expected by children with similar backgrounds and prior attainment. This is due to very good teaching, strong leadership and management and high expectations of work and behaviour. The emphasis placed on the creative arts is central to the school's success. In its use of resources, the school offers good value for money and is very effective overall.

What the school does well

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve well, especially in mathematics, the creative arts and music
- Very good teaching and learning are at the heart of the school's success in raising standards well beyond the average for similar schools
- The school is very well led by a determined and effective headteacher and other senior staff, supported by a strong governing body
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with each other and with adults are very good
- The school makes excellent use of the community and links with other organisations to support children's personal development and their learning
- The involvement of parents in the life and work of the school has helped transform it into a very effective learning community

What could be improved

- The school accommodation needs to be enlarged and improved to provide adequate play space, better outdoor facilities for the nursery and reception classes and a proper school library and resources area

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection in July 2001, which took the school out of special measures. The quality of education and the standards achieved throughout the school have risen since then. There is now satisfactory provision in the nursery and children achieve well by the end of the foundation stage. Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are now good. Governors have improved their approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and now exercise all their functions very well.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	A	C	A
Mathematics	E*	B	B	A*
Science	E	B	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

As the above table shows, the school has improved standards significantly since the year 2000, going from being well below the national average to above average in two years. Last year's results placed the school in the top five per cent of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds – this is a notable achievement. There are particular strengths in mathematics in all year groups and, together with science, these standards were above the national average in 2002. Standards in English are improving rapidly with continued good teaching, especially at Key Stage 2. Overall, standards have risen faster than the national rate of improvement.

Last year at the end of Year 2, pupils' standards were below the national average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Once again, compared to pupils in similar schools, seven-year-olds at Charles Dickens performed very well. Despite generally low starting points, pupils reach the expected levels by the end of the foundation stage (Reception year) and continue to make good or better progress as they go through the school.

Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm that pupils continue to achieve well. The focus on the creative arts leads to very high standards in those subjects. The proportion of children with special educational needs in some year groups is higher than others and may result in overall performance varying from year to year. The school continues to add value to pupils' achievements in all years and the school's statutory targets have been exceeded.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and doing their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils treat each other and their surroundings with respect.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school is racially and culturally very harmonious. Pupils are growing in confidence and self-esteem.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, though improving. Unauthorised absence has increased, while authorised absence has fallen.

Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their learning are amongst the school's significant strengths. They enjoy talking about their work and are most enthusiastic learners. Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved dramatically over recent years, due to clear and consistent expectations of high standards. Pupils respect the school building, displays, equipment and each other's property. They get on well together whether at work or play. Although improved in recent years, attendance continues to demand the school's attention.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good and a major factor in the school's success in raising standards. The teaching of English and literacy is good; in mathematics and numeracy it is very good. There is particularly strong teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 classes, though all classes benefit from good teaching and many teachers regularly teach very good or excellent lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well because they are taught and supported very well. The large number of pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support and also make good progress. A very good feature of many lessons is the way in which pupils' use of language is developed by teachers and assistants. Pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts aloud, to describe their actions and to use correct vocabulary when talking, for example, about mathematical or scientific processes. Pupils' language development needs are met in all subjects and this contributes to their overall achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school has developed an enriched curriculum that celebrates the culture of the widely diverse school community, through an inspired focus on creative art.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress towards appropriate learning targets. They are well supported and fully included in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well taught and receive targeted support. As a result, they make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has successfully created a positive environment where pupils' personal development can flourish. The school council enables their ideas to be voiced and considered. Pupils' social development is excellent. The many cultures represented at the school are celebrated and valued.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school gives a high priority to health, safety and welfare matters.

The school offers a rich curriculum that extends beyond the normal school day with popular after-school clubs offering a range of learning activities. The two-year cycle of teaching is particularly suited to classes which have children from more than one year group. In geography, however, the school needs to ensure that specific knowledge and skills are taught over time. Pupils praised the focus on creative arts which enables them to express themselves in various ways and helps to develop their self-confidence about their culture and identity.

There are good arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance and their personal development. Assessment procedures are good and pupils' progress is regularly tracked. Strategies to

manage pupils' behaviour have proved very effective, resulting in the very good behaviour now seen around the school.

Much effort has gone into improving the involvement of parents and this has been very successful. Their support has a very good impact on their children's learning. Parents receive good information from the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Strong and purposeful leadership has led to significant improvements at the school. All staff with management roles are very effective in their work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Much improved levels of challenge and accountability are evident. The governing body fulfils all statutory duties and has considerable strengths.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Performance data are analysed and compared with other schools. Regular monitoring of teaching and standards leads to improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses its resources wisely and has cut costs to offer good value for money in what it provides.

The clear vision, clarity of purpose and strong leadership of the school's management team have brought the school to where it is today. The headteacher's success in securing support from a range of sources to move the school forward has been central to the overall improvement noted since the previous inspection.

Maintaining the high quality of teaching and learning while several key members of the permanent staff have been absent from school for long periods has been a significant achievement. Those teachers covering posts of responsibility are doing a very good job. The establishment of strategic teams of staff to focus on key areas for development (the creative arts, assessment, the school community, special educational needs and English as an additional language) is having a measurable impact on the quality of education provided at the school.

The school makes good use of the expertise amongst adults who work with the children and has good learning resources. Recent improvements to the accommodation include new playground equipment which is very popular with pupils. Further improvements to the accommodation are planned – and urgently needed. The playground is too small for the number of children at the school, reception classes have no outdoor area for their use and that available to the nursery class is inadequate. The school would also benefit from a dedicated library and learning resource area.

The school is having to manage a very difficult budget situation and has taken very sensible steps to address the current deficit. The school's finances are very well managed and money is used wisely. In reducing its costs, the school has applied best value principles to spending decisions and now provides high quality and good added value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards achieved by their children • The quality of teaching and learning • The approachability of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground space and nursery outdoor area

Although only 10 parents attended the meeting and 39 responded to the questionnaire, parents spoken to during the inspection confirmed the views expressed. Evidence from the inspection entirely supports these very positive views. The involvement of parents in the life of the school makes them well placed to make sound judgements about its work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery with attainment that is below the standard expected for their age. Satisfactory teaching in the Nursery and good teaching in the Reception classes enable them to make good progress, so that they reach the standards expected nationally in all areas of the recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. There has been considerable improvement in pupils' progress in the Nursery since the last inspection.
2. As pupils make a good start in the reception class, they show good achievement in all areas of learning and reach the standards expected at the start of Year 1. However, these overall standards are then adversely affected by pupils entering the school in all year groups part way through the year. This introduces a wider range of attainment in classes and almost all of these late-entry pupils have English as an additional language and some have social difficulties, which initially hinder their learning. As teachers work very hard and the school offers them good support and guidance, pupils achieve very well by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Most pupils generally reach at least average or better standards in all subjects of the National Curriculum.
3. In the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2002, pupils' reached below average standards in reading, but average standards in writing. However, compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, their performance was above average in reading and well above average in writing. Standards in writing have improved over the last four years. In both reading and writing, the school mirrors the national trend of improvement. Standards in mathematics in the 2002 tests were well above average and have shown very good improvement over the previous four years, much higher than the national trend. Pupils' performance in mathematics was also excellent compared with similar schools.
4. The results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 were the same as in the previous year, except in English where standards were not as high as the previous year. Standards, compared with all schools nationally, were average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. This is above average attainment overall. Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science were excellent when compared with similar schools, placing Charles Dickens Primary in the top five per cent of these schools. The pupils also achieved very well in English and exceptionally in mathematics and science compared with their previous performance in Year 2, which means that the school is in the top 25 per cent of all schools. The school's results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend of improvement.
5. There has been some variation in the attainment of boys and girls over time. Girls have been doing better than boys against national comparisons. However, both groups have shown improvement compared to pupils of their age nationally for the last four years. There is no significant difference between the performances of different ethnic groups. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils in mathematics, science, creative writing, music and arts. These pupils are making good progress through very well planned extra-curricular activities. The school monitors the progress of all pupils closely.
6. Inspection evidence from lessons and work seen show that pupils benefit from the good teaching and achieve well in lessons and over time. In Years 1 and 2, pupils also make good progress in acquiring knowledge of letter-sounds and in Year 2 are approaching national expectations. The strong focus on speaking and listening and their links to writing – a priority focus for the school and successfully reinforced across the curriculum for pupils - have resulted in standards that are now in line with national expectations by Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils sustain their progress and pupils make strong gains in all aspects of English by Year 6. They listen and speak with confidence, using a good range of vocabulary; they read fluently with understanding and can discuss what they read. They can write at length, using correct grammar, punctuation and complex sentences to extend meaning and details. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above

- average standards in speaking and listening and secure average standards in reading and writing because of high quality teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
7. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good progress in understanding of number, and can add, subtract and multiply with confidence, attaining standards that are above average. This good progress is sustained in Years 3 and 4. Pupils learn to manipulate numbers confidently and develop good understanding of shapes and measures. They show a keen interest in using mathematical language. By Years 5 and 6, pupils have a very secure understanding of number and number patterns. They can generally move between fractions and percentages and understand their relationships to ratio. They can explain rules and methods they have used and write clear accounts of their investigations. At the end of Year 6, standards are above national expectations.
 8. In the current Years 2 and 6, attainment in science is average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress as a result of good teaching, but pupils make better progress in Years 5 and 6 as the teaching is very good in these years. Pupils across the school develop skills of investigation very effectively. In ICT, standards are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Achievement is good in this subject.
 9. Standards are above average in art and in design and technology at the end of Year 2, but well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are high in these subjects because of professional input from artists, print makers, dancers and actors to raise pupils' and parents' expectations. In music, pupils achieve very well in all years and reach standards that are above average by both Years 2 and 6. In other foundation subjects, standards have improved from less secure to average as expected for pupils' age, except in geography where they are a little lower. In religious education, standards throughout the school are broadly at levels laid down in the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' work shows they have a general understanding of religious diversity within the school community.
 10. The well-targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as additional language (EAL) enables these pupils to make good progress. Pupils with EAL in Years 5 and 6 make very good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the management of the provision was unsatisfactory and pupils made only reasonable progress.
 11. There are a number of reasons why academic standards and achievement have improved. Teamwork amongst teachers and assistants is very good, as is the ethos for learning, which encourages all pupils to adopt a 'can do' approach. Teaching is better, with more good, very good and excellent teaching than previously reported.
 12. The school exceeded its targets in both English and mathematics by a wide margin last year. The school is on course to reach its targets for this year, for both English and mathematics. Target setting has made an impact on standards. Consequently, pupils' test results at the end of Year 6 are high and the school's efforts have, rightly, been rewarded with national achievement awards in 2002 and 2003. At the heart of this achievement lies not only the good quality teaching and very effective leadership of the headteacher, but also the very significant contributions of the enriched whole curriculum. The school is very successful in fostering pupils' all round personal development that raises their confidence and self-esteem. For example, there are very well-planned opportunities for pupils to observe and participate in singing, debates, theatre and drama. These help pupils to develop high aspirations and a determination to succeed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school have continued to improve since the time of the last inspection and are now very good throughout the school. Inspection evidence confirms the views of almost all parents who expressed an opinion before the inspection, that their children love coming to school and enjoy the varied and stimulating activities provided for them. This makes a substantial contribution to how well they learn. Pupils say that it is a good school and they value the rich mix of cultures present. For example, pupils in Year 3 speak with pride about the number of languages spoken between them. They know classroom routines well and take pride in the well-planned opportunities to take responsibility for these. Pupils settle quickly and willingly at the beginning of lessons, show pride in their work and most are pleased and confident to explain what

they are doing. They particularly enjoy practical activities, with most quickly becoming involved and working industriously to complete tasks set. A small but significant minority of pupils finds it difficult to focus on work for long periods. They do, however, respond very well to the large majority of lessons that offer varied and well-planned activities that engage, interest and challenge them. Pupils develop independence and responsibility for their own learning through the good quality homework that is set for them to do each week. The regularity with which parents are seen in the school, particularly their attendance at the learning opportunities arranged for them, has a positive impact on pupils' views of school and their attitudes to learning.

14. Standards of behaviour have continued to improve since the time of the last inspection. There is a very good response from pupils to the consistently high expectations from staff. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly community that supports learning very well. In lessons, behaviour is only rarely less than satisfactory and usually very much better. Pupils have a very clear understanding of school rules, both for the classroom and outside. They respond very well to strategies used to manage occasional lapses in self-discipline; these are often associated with over enthusiasm, for example in physical education when they anticipate their teachers' instructions. Out of lessons, they interact very confidently with each other, staff and visitors and are invariably well mannered, polite and courteous. At lunchtimes they play and socialise happily, often showing high spirits, but also goodwill towards each other. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. Fixed term exclusions have reduced in number with 12 during the last year. This is in response to the effective measures taken by the school to identify and provide help for pupils needing support to manage their behaviour. School premises, equipment, materials and the many displays of pupils' work are treated with high levels of respect. There is no graffiti and very little litter is dropped. School council representatives are actively involved in considering behaviour in the playground and show a responsible attitude where this impacts on the happiness or safety of others.
15. Relationships throughout the school and the response of pupils to opportunities provided for their personal development are very good. They usually listen with respect to what others have to say, seldom interrupting. This results in a growing confidence about sharing views and opinions and contributes well to a developing ability to evaluate their own and others' work effectively and with sensitivity. There are high levels of mutual respect between teachers and pupils leading to very good levels of co-operation in lessons and confidence about sharing concerns. Occasional differences between pupils are dealt with well and, although a few younger pupils say these are sometimes repeated, they feel safe and confident in the school environment.
16. There are high levels of racial harmony throughout the school. During the inspection, no incidents of bullying or aggression between pupils were seen. When working in small groups pupils co-operate well, sharing happily when needed and contributing to discussions with growing confidence. Very effective social skills develop progressively as pupils move through the school. This is very evident in the dining room where they socialise effectively, both with their peers and adults. The relationships between pupils and lunchtime assistants are very positive ensuring they are happy and confident at this time. Pupils value opportunities for them to express their views through the school council about matters that affect their community. They were involved, for example, in sampling and agreeing new menus for school lunches. The respect in which their views are held improves their growing self-esteem. Throughout the school, pupils are aware of their ability to influence decisions affecting them and they value this. In all year groups, pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities for them to take responsibility for everyday routines, carrying out tasks conscientiously.
17. Pupils usually like coming to school and attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection. Although falling previously, unauthorised absence has increased during the current year to over 1.6 per cent. Over the same period, authorised absence has decreased to 5.14 per cent. Extended family holidays contribute significantly to both these figures which remain too high. Other contributory factors are a higher proportion of illness amongst pupils than is usually seen and social problems that impact on family life. Punctuality at the beginning of the day has improved since the last inspection. Although there are still too many late arrivals, most of these arrive within the first few minutes after the bell has gone and show urgency about getting to their classrooms as soon as possible. A few parents regularly bring their children to school late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good. Of the 82 lessons observed, almost 88 per cent were good or better with a high proportion (45 per cent) being very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There is particularly strong teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 classes, though all classes benefit from good teaching and many teachers regularly teach very good or excellent lessons. This very good teaching is one of the major reasons for the school's success in raising standards well beyond the average for similar schools.
19. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan their lessons with great skill. Carefully chosen learning objectives are conveyed clearly to pupils and teachers check that these have been achieved by the end of the lesson when learning points are consolidated. Teaching methods are well selected and matched to pupils' learning abilities – lessons are often aimed towards higher achieving pupils which raises the expectations of all and promotes very good outcomes. This was seen in mathematics and in other excellent lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2.
20. Lessons progress at a good pace and activities are well managed by teachers and support staff. Pupils are given plenty to do and respond very well to the stimulating tasks provided. Their behaviour in class is very good. They make concerted efforts to produce good quality work and demonstrate high levels of interest, motivation and enthusiasm for their learning. They particularly enjoy practical and creative lessons and show a genuine love of the arts – displays around the school and discussions with pupils provide convincing evidence of this. Some of the most successful lessons observed were in music making and singing.
21. The teaching of English and literacy is good with some very good and excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. An outstanding Year 5 lesson contained very well-prepared, stimulating activities that integrated drama, speaking and listening and writing very effectively. The teacher made excellent use of mime to ensure full understanding by pupils learning English as an additional language. In mathematics and numeracy, the quality of teaching is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. The best lessons include pacy and demanding oral work followed by well-structured teaching which uses a wide range of resources. Plenaries are often used to take pupils' learning forward an extra step or two. The teaching of music is particularly strong.
22. Pupils are supported in their learning in a variety of ways by special educational needs and classroom assistants, nursery nurses and by other adults. Their work is carefully managed by class teachers and senior staff in order to make an effective contribution to lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and their individual learning plans and targets are known to all relevant staff. Short-term targets are appropriate and are reviewed regularly. Special support assistants work well with class teachers and ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in groups within the class. Good use is made of specialist programmes designed by speech, language and occupational therapists to support pupils with communication or physical difficulties. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well.
23. The large number of pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support and progress well. A very good feature of many lessons is the way in which pupils' use of English is developed by teachers and assistants. Pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts aloud, to describe their actions and to use correct vocabulary when talking, for example, about mathematical or scientific processes. This focus on speaking and listening enables those pupils to benefit from language development in all subjects and contributes to their overall achievement.
24. Many lessons present high levels of challenge to pupils through skilful questioning by teachers. This draws out pupils' prior knowledge and enables teachers to check for understanding. Questions are often targeted at individuals or groups of children and teachers record their progress regularly, building up a picture of their achievement over time. Extension tasks or challenges are often presented in lessons to take learning a stage further and motivate pupils to aim high. Teachers' marking and constructive comments in books help pupils to improve their work. Homework is set regularly and provides opportunities to reinforce what pupils learn in class.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall. The curriculum for the foundation stage is good and is securely based on the recommended six areas of learning. Teachers support diversity of provision through their four strategic teams that consider specific elements of the school's work. The teams have developed an enriched curriculum that celebrates the backgrounds of the widely diverse school community, through an inspired focus on creative art. The school has a very good range of extra-curricular activities both during lunchtime and after school, which many pupils attend and value. Some examples of clubs include filmmaking, cookery, computers, chess and sports such as football, cricket and dance. The school's gifted and talented writers attend writing clubs and are preparing for a Writing Award competition.
26. Since the previous inspection in 2001, the school has continued to strengthen implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This is having a positive impact on school test results, as well as developing consistent strategies for teaching across the school. There are good links with the Centre for Language in Primary Education, where the headteacher is a trustee. Foundation subjects are developing well, which is an improvement on the previous inspection judgements on the school's curriculum. The school has implemented good ideas such as a two-year curriculum design in all subjects except the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. In particular this has a good impact on mixed year groups and offers flexibility to match the needs of pupils. Religious education is developing well and complies with the local Agreed Syllabus. Physical education, as identified in all previous reports, continues to experience problems for outdoor activities because of the limited recreation space in the playground.
27. Careful deployment of teaching assistants enables teachers to plan rotational use of the small information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Classroom computers are having less impact, as there are few strategies for ensuring pupils' individual access is recorded, to make best use of the resource and enhance the application of ICT. Stimulating curriculum experiences come from the wide range of voluntary and professional input from creative and performing arts visitors. Parents and local companies provide reading support on a regular basis and several curriculum areas benefit from the expertise of the artist in residence. Some parents provide support for dance and computers amongst other areas. Classroom libraries are good, but the school lacks the advantage of a library or learning resource area to enrich pupils' love of books.
28. The school has a good equal opportunities policy and there is no concern over access to the curriculum for boys or girls, for example all boys do dance and girls construct in design and technology. However withdrawal from lessons for pupils to have one-to-one reading practice with the volunteers raises issue. Improvement in reading is good, but pupils miss out on the subjects from which they are withdrawn. Provision for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is good. The curriculum addresses special events such as Black History month and celebrates the cultural festivals of different groups of pupils. Everyday teaching is ensuring EAL pupils make equal gains to their peers. Examples of innovative teaching seen in art and drama, using puppets, enabled the practice of language skills through performance.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It fully meets statutory requirements. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are held at the appropriate time attended by parents and other professionals and pupils' views are recorded. Class teachers maintain records of pupils' special educational needs and set targets for improvement. The school has recently adopted group education plans for those students who have similar needs. This is a sensible development. Individual education plans are generally well written and are moderated by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Targets especially in literacy are realistic and achievable and include measurable short steps to achievement. In other areas, such as behaviour, targets are less specific and measurable. For example, "to encourage X to pay attention to lessons in the afternoon" is a target for the teacher rather than the pupil.

30. The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship. Cooled purified water is provided in every classroom and snacks have to be fruit. There is a good programme that highlights issues such as drugs awareness and sex education. Parents are given the opportunity to contribute or, if they wish, to remove their child from particularly sensitive areas, such as sex education. Pupils with a specific religious belief may also be excused from assembly if their parents wish. Circle time is used widely in the school, but there is no set pattern; teachers will often use this technique when there has been a particular issue at break time or when there is an obvious problem for a pupil where they may benefit from sharing feelings. Pupils appreciate the principle that these sessions are confidential to the class. In some classes, pupils make good use of a special box where they can post problems for teacher and class support: these can be anonymous.
31. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is excellent. Parents' coffee mornings help to identify parental skills and *Time Banks* credits are a reward for their contribution. Parents specifically support dance, reading and ICT. This is an expanding area of parental interest because co-ordination by the school's outreach worker is particularly effective in approaching parents, grandparents and community members to get involved. Local companies and international conglomerates such as Price Waterhouse make generous contributions to the curriculum such as the mosaic workshop. The results of the workshop have been used to enhance the welcoming entrance to the school playground. The nationally acclaimed Tate Modern, English National Opera, National Theatre and The Globe are some of the facilities where pupils' benefit from links created via the Education Acton Zone (EAZ) and the enthusiasm of the staff.
32. Links with other educational institutions are excellent. Local schools link through the EAZ. The school also has links with St Paul's Cathedral, James Allen Preparatory School and the City of London School for boys. Local colleges and South Bank University are also heavily involved in the school's development making a real impact on pupils' learning and extending teaching skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The school has successfully created a positive environment where pupil's personal development can flourish. There are very good relationships between all adults who serve the school. The shared respect between pupils and adults helps to foster a school community where all are valued, and there are few tensions. Pupils' are seen as individuals and their needs and beliefs are respected.
34. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school has a multi-faith setting and all aspects of faith are catered for without bias, for example Jehovah Witnesses do not attend assembly and provision is made for them to engage in another task. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal views and the regular assembly always has a period of reflection or a prayer for others. The school gives time and thought to charities. They have worked on looking at the plight of children who were victims of war and filled shoeboxes with gifts that can be sent to children in other countries. Arrangements for assemblies were very good with beautiful flowers as a focal point and very good singing. Opportunities for spiritual reflection were strong in subjects such as art, but this was not consistent in all curriculum areas.
35. The school's provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have respect for themselves and others, and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils take turns and know the rules for fair play; an example was the very organised use of the new school playground equipment where pupils took turns without being organised by staff. The school is very clean and well ordered thanks to the consistently high standards of maintenance by the site manager and her team. The behaviour policy is regularly used across the school, which gives pupils a very good structure for personal responsibility. All classes negotiate their own class rules; this was used well in Year 4 design and technology to encourage reflection on agreed targets. Parents are involved in changes made to the moral code in the school, so there is a consistent expectation between home and school. Recently, parents signed a code of practice for acceptable use of the Internet.

36. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The school council is well established and council representatives take their work very seriously. Members of the council see their role to take the views of their class to the council in order to review a situation and improve the school. For example, their input has helped the school meals cooked on site to reflect many cultures. Lunchtime is a very social occasion. Pupils appreciate the staff that prepare and serve the meals and the quality of the food. From nursery onwards, pupils take responsibility for entertaining visitors to the school, for example the nursery hosted the parents' coffee morning during the inspection and children were proud of the cakes they made to share with the parents. The school is a harmonious community and pupils play and work very well together.
37. Cultural development is very good throughout the school. The diversity of cultures within the school is celebrated through very good display. Where appropriate, traditional dress is respected. Understanding of different races, cultures and faiths is promoted actively in assemblies and lessons, which has an impact on raising standards because pupils are proud of themselves and their roots. Rich links with local theatres, mentioned earlier, plus active sessions with local poets and artists make a very good impact on cultural understanding. Pupils also have many opportunities to walk by the Thames and use their immediate environment for studying local history and art. There are very good opportunities to appreciate artists and musicians from other cultures; during an assembly that focused on Uganda, some rhythmical African music was successfully used to set the scene. Pupils at Charles Dickens are very well prepared for living in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school makes very good arrangements to provide for the health, safety and welfare of pupils. The very positive relationships they have with adults ensure that pupils are confident about sharing concerns when they need to. There is a suitably trained person with designated responsibility for child protection. All new staff are briefed in procedures. These are subsequently revisited for the benefit of all staff at the beginning of each term. Within personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) pupils learn about aspects of personal safety and there are opportunities for them to take part in road safety training. There is an effective health and safety policy and the school is very conscientious about ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, although those for trips and visits out of school are usually informal. There are suitable arrangements to ensure that any 'day to day' needs for repairs or renewals are reported and dealt with effectively.
39. During lessons, teachers are conscientious to ensure that safety routines are followed and that pupils are briefed in safe practice. The regular testing of appliances and equipment used in the school meets statutory requirements. There are suitable arrangements to deal with necessary first aid. Evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient frequency to ensure both staff and pupils know what to do in the event of an emergency. Supervision at break and lunch times is very effective with high levels of awareness about safety and security. The school ensures pupils' views are taken into account. At a school council meeting during the inspection, they were able to discuss use of new playground equipment that resulted in them making recommendations about queuing, numbers using apparatus at the same time and rules for behaviour around it.
40. There are good arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development. Very effective behaviour management has resulted in significant improvements that have a very positive impact on how well pupils learn. The policy and procedures that guide this aspect of the school's work are clearly expressed and well known to both staff and pupils. The school has ensured that members of staff are suitably trained in strategies that support good behaviour. Throughout the school, these are used consistently well so that pupils know what will happen if they misbehave. Strategies to support pupils returning from exclusion and to identify and provide help for those in danger of permanent exclusion are successful in reducing the number of occasions these measures are necessary. Exclusion is used only as a last resort when other measures to change unacceptable patterns of behaviour have been unsuccessful. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in agreeing a way forward. An anti-bullying culture is promoted well, both formally through personal, health and social education and by individual class teachers. The school takes the few instances of bullying very seriously and deals with them promptly and firmly. With a few

younger pupils who lack maturity, occasional minor squabbles re-occur and these are dealt with well.

41. Hard work by the school to raise levels of attendance has resulted in some improvement. Registration procedures, including for pupils who are late, ensure an accurate record of those present. The school works very well with the education welfare service in following up pupils whose attendance is very low. In addition, there is a home/school liaison worker for two days each week, part of whose role is to work with families where attendance is poor. The school monitors individual pupils well to identify patterns of absence and where levels are falling without apparent reason, and these are followed up well.
42. At present, the attendance levels of all the various groups that make up the school population, for example ethnic groups, are not analysed as a means of identifying possible strategies to improve attendance further. Letters about attendance sent to parents whose first language is not English are not routinely translated into their mother tongue to support a prompt response. The school has identified pupils with poor patterns of attendance and targets these for first day contact in the event of unexplained absence. This measure is not extended to all unexplained absences resulting in missed opportunities to stress to parents the urgency the school places on their children returning as soon as possible. In many instances, annual reports on their children's progress provide for parents a clear evaluation of the impact attendance has had on how well they have learnt. This is not consistent across the school, for example when two pupils both with attendance of 91.1 per cent are described as having, variously, "good" and "excellent" attendance. The school is aware of the need to include more detailed information about attendance, including the number of unauthorised absences, in annual reports about pupils' progress.
43. Arrangements to assess academic progress and the subsequent use of information obtained to inform curriculum planning are good overall. This aspect of the school's work has been a recent focus for development with a strategic team working on raising standards. Children are assessed when they start in the nursery and their subsequent progress is checked regularly. In addition, optional QCA tests for English and mathematics are used at the end of each year to analyse individual and group performance. The school does an analysis of errors after these tests as a means of focusing efforts on raising standards. In other subjects, end of year assessments are monitored in the autumn term to check for accuracy and to make predictions for the following year. There has been recent professional development for all staff on 'levelling' that has increased the degree of consistency between teachers' assessments. The strategic team has a good grasp on standards of assessment across the school and has effectively identified targets for future development.
44. Assessment is a particular strength in mathematics and teachers have a clear understanding of where pupils are and what they need to do to improve. In English, standards are good with effective use of electronic tracking to set group and class targets. This results in the work set matching the needs of pupils. Standards of assessment are also good in art and design and technology where pupils' self assessment is being piloted and provides effective opportunities for pupils to analyse their work against that of others. In ICT, there is good assessment with portfolios of benchmarked examples of work to support all staff in their assessments. In geography, history and physical education standards are satisfactory, although there are no written records against which to track progress over time. In religious education, the school assesses in line with the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
45. The school provides very effective educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievements. There are suitable arrangements to introduce children into the nursery and these ensure that they settle quickly and well. Work is marked regularly and usually offers constructive advice and encouragement. Homework is set regularly, ensuring pupils know what is expected and that both they and their parents can plan the necessary time to do it. Learning is supported effectively by the individual advice teachers give during lessons. Pupils mostly know the targets that have been set for the groups they work in. They are particularly well motivated by the praise they receive when they have done well. The school has made a good start in identifying and supporting pupils with particular gifts and talents by ensuring suitable work is set and providing additional activities after school. Learning support assistants work to high standards and provide very effective guidance and support where needed. The very good range of activities provided outside of lessons ensures there are opportunities for pupils to extend and build on the work they

do in classrooms. There are suitable arrangements to transfer information about pupils' academic attainment to secondary schools.

46. Teachers know individual pupils very well and make effective assessments of their personal development in the annual written reports to parents about their children's progress. There are high expectations for pupils to take responsibility for classroom routines and opportunities for them to contribute to decision-making through the school council. The school has recently sought the views of pupils about them taking greater responsibility for running this, for example by chairing meetings and taking minutes. Assemblies are planned well to provide thought-provoking topics and offer effective personal guidance. The personal, health and social education programme ensures pupils consider the wider issues of life such as relationships, personal health, the environment and the wider community. The school ensures that sex education is taught in the context of family life and there is effective guidance about drugs, for example, on prescribed medicines. The school operates a very successful healthy eating scheme and has raised very high levels of awareness amongst pupils about the value of good food. The very high standards set in the dining room ensure pupils relish the well-prepared and healthy meals provided for them. This ensures they eat well to provide the necessary energy to make their best efforts during the afternoon.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Those parents expressing a view are very pleased with what the school provides and achieves. All find staff approachable and accessible when they need to discuss concerns and they say that teaching is good. Almost all say the school works closely with them, that their children like school, are expected to work hard, that they make good progress and are helped to become mature and responsible. They are confident that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence strongly supports these positive views. No significant areas of concern were identified through questionnaires returned by parents or at the pre-inspection meeting, although the number responding to these was relatively low.
48. The school has developed a very effective partnership with parents and provides a very good range of information overall. There are well-planned opportunities for parents to find out about the school and meet teachers before their children start in the nursery. The prospectus and governors' annual report are very well produced to ensure that information is provided in an easily accessible manner. They effectively inform parents about expectations, routines and achievement. The weekly newsletters are lively and informative, and provide reminders about relevant dates in the school's calendar. There are regular information workshops about, for example, literacy, numeracy and testing at the end of Years 2 and 6. At the beginning of each term, parents receive an outline about what their children will be learning. Arrangements for homework are made clear, enabling parents to take an active interest in the work provided for their children to do at home.
49. The school seeks parental involvement where any aspect of their children's lives at school causes concern. The home/school liaison worker makes a very valuable contribution to parental involvement. She focuses on areas such as family support, attendance, exclusion, liaison with support agencies and referrals, pastoral care, pre-admission contact and support at the time of transfer to secondary education. In addition, the role includes providing learning opportunities for parents to help them understand how they can support their children at home. Parents value these sessions and many attend regularly. The home-school agreement provides the foundations for an effective partnership.
50. There are very effective arrangements for parents to find out how well their children are doing. They include formal opportunities for them to meet class teachers each term. These ensure that minor difficulties, for example with children settling in to their new class at the beginning of the year, are picked up and dealt with at an early stage. Teachers take their classes to the playground at the end of the school day and are accessible for parents to discuss concerns on an informal basis where needed. Annual progress reports issued at the end of the school year are very well written. In English, maths and science they evaluate progress and what pupils know, understand and can do very effectively. This leads to clearly expressed and specific targets that help parents to understand what their children must do to improve. Reporting in other subjects is

less detailed, but helpful. Reporting on attitudes and the overall personal development of pupils shows very good understanding and evaluation of individual pupils and their growth in maturity. The school ensures that parents have the opportunity to discuss end of year reports with their children's teachers. Results of testing at the end of Years 2 and 6 are suitably reported.

51. The involvement of parents with the school has a very good impact on their children's learning. There are high levels of attendance at events arranged for them, including consultations about progress. This is in part because of hard work by the school to ensure these are appealing. For example, about 200 parents attended the governors' annual meeting when the school organised an international food event at the same time. Although there is no parent and teacher association, fund-raising events are supported very well and parents willingly help out with the work involved when asked. When additional support is needed for trips and visits out of school, there is no shortage of volunteers amongst parents. There is a very high level of parental presence in the school for a variety of regular workshops. On two days each week, parents are able to attend classes on ICT. For parents of younger children, there are weekly meetings where they are supported in developing stimulating and exciting activities for younger children at home. These valuable opportunities result in a high level of parental presence, making the school a focus for whole community learning that has a positive impact on their children's attitudes and the overall ethos of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. Leadership, management and governance are very good with many strong features. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school in the form of strong, purposeful leadership. She is very active and successful in obtaining support from outside agencies to bring about improvements. Throughout the school, there is a tangible commitment to raising standards and providing a high quality education for all children. This has borne fruit in recent years with the sustained improvement to standards at both key stages.
53. The school aims – influenced by the Dickens novel *Great Expectations* – are reflected in the life of the school in impressive ways: the quality of pupils' work in books and on display; their extremely positive attitudes to school; the very good teaching and learning in all years and the involvement of parents and the wider community in school activities. All pupils are treated equally and with respect. They and their parents are full of praise for what the school does for them and the extent to which they have access to facilities, activities and support. It is in every respect an inclusive school.
54. There are robust systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning and the progress made by pupils through lesson observation, checking teachers' planning and reviewing pupils' work. This process of monitoring and review leads to the identification of priorities for improvement which are supported by very good financial planning and a wide programme of professional development. Teachers with subject leadership responsibilities, however, are not all yet fully involved in monitoring their curriculum area. Performance management of teaching and support staff is in place. Staff new to the school, including those newly qualified or undergoing training, receive very thorough guidance and support.
55. Teachers are well qualified and committed to their work. At the time of the inspection, several senior teachers were absent from school due to maternity leave or long-term sickness. As a temporary measure, a number of less experienced staff are assuming responsibility for whole school provision such as support for pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL), assessment and some subject areas. These extra responsibilities are being carried out conscientiously and professionally. In a region where teacher recruitment is particularly difficult, the school has been highly successful in appointing good teachers to sustain and build upon the improvements already apparent.
56. A particular feature of the strong leadership is the establishment of four strategic teams of teachers, including all members of staff, to consider key aspects of school improvement. These teams meet regularly to discuss and take forward a programme of development in assessment, the community, the creative arts, and special educational needs (SEN) and EAL. The impact of their work is apparent in the good practice observed during the inspection.

57. Leadership and management of SEN have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The SEN co-ordinator has carried through a programme of action to improve provision. This includes increasing the inclusion of pupils with SEN by ensuring that most individual support is provided within the classroom in a group setting; improving the way in which individual education plans are written so that they focus more closely on pupils' principal barriers to learning; developing the skills of special support assistants by providing training and support, including access to specialist training in areas such as dyslexia, and increasing the involvement of parents in planning to meet pupils' special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for SEN also works in the school and provides good administrative support to the co-ordinator.
58. There has also been improvement in the management of support for pupils learning English as an additional language resulting in this provision now being good. More information can be found in the separate section on EAL which follows.
59. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities and has increased its influence on school development in recent years. Led by a strong chair and vice-chair, governors can now draw on collective expertise in education, business, finance and other sectors which enable them to maintain a strategic view of the school and ensure that it is well placed to move ahead with confidence. As part of its response to previous criticism that it did not hold the school sufficiently to account for standards achieved, the governing body has established a monitoring and performance working group which looks closely at the school's results and other qualitative information to identify areas for attention. Governors visiting the school complete a short report form and feed back their views at meetings. One full governing body meeting each term is devoted to curriculum matters and committees report on personnel, finance and premises issues on a regular basis. Governors now exercise their "critical friend" role very effectively.
60. The school has had notable success in securing support from outside agencies and companies. This has brought additional resources into the school where they are most needed, for example, to support reading activities for pupils and parents and in drawing up plans for extending the school site. Support from the Education Action Zone, the South Bank Employers Group, Time Banks, the Centre for Language in Primary Education and others has been invaluable in helping to improve quality and raise standards.
61. The school's finances are very well managed and the budget deficit built up during the period when the school was in special measures is gradually being eliminated. The finance manager has reduced expenditure by reviewing contracts and achieving good value for money from suppliers of goods and services. The school makes very good use of available resources and specific funds to support pupils' learning – grants for SEN and EAL are prime examples. Resources are allocated to whole school development planning and appropriate decisions are taken, based on clear priorities. The school spends its money wisely. Although the costs per pupil are high, the school adds significant value to pupils' learning, enabling them to achieve well. This makes the school highly effective and shows that good value is provided for the money spent.
62. Resources for learning are generally good, being of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the demands of the curriculum. There are good stocks of books in classrooms and pupils have access to computers. Interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and videocams are all used as teaching aids. Classrooms are reasonably spacious and well-equipped and the whole school is clean and bright with colourful displays of children's work. The installation of attractive new play equipment in the playground is the latest in a series of improvements secured by the school's leaders.
63. There are limitations to the present accommodation which impede pupils' learning. The outdoor area of the nursery is small, cramped and inadequate for an extended early years curriculum. Reception classes have no dedicated outdoor areas. The playground itself is too small to accommodate the number of children on roll and the school is obliged to stagger break and lunch times in order to maximise use of the space available. There is no school library or resource area where pupils can develop their research skills and become independent learners. Solutions to these problems have been proposed and plans have been drawn up to extend the school site across Lant Street to provide more land for outside use. The conversion of one of the three halls

into a large library and resource area has also been proposed. These developments are essential if the school is to maintain and improve the quality of education already provided for pupils and to raise standards further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to maintain the progress made by the school so far and to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- make arrangements to enlarge and improve the school accommodation to provide adequate play space, better outdoor facilities for the nursery and reception classes and a proper school library and resources area. (Paragraph 63)

The school should also consider the following additional areas for improvement:

- further develop the provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language by improving the quality of assessment of their fluency in English and more accurately identifying the needs of EAL pupils in the Foundation Stage; (Paragraph 69)
- improve procedures for raising levels of attendance by following up all absences earlier and ensuring that reports to parents contain more precise information about attendance; (Paragraph 42)
- develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators to include greater involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards in their subject; (Paragraph 54)
- improve the teaching of specific skills in geography. (Paragraph 131)

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

65. The provision for English as an additional language (EAL) is good. The school has improved its provision from unsatisfactory to good since the last inspection, and this represents very good improvement. Nearly three-quarters of the pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and about an eighth of all pupils (38) across the school are at early stages of English acquisition. These pupils receive targeted support under the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) grant.

66. There are a number of reasons why the provision has improved so well. The management and co-ordination of EAL are at least satisfactory now. This helps the school to work effectively towards raising the achievement of EAL pupils. The school uses the stages of English fluency to assess their needs, and there are well thought out arrangements for targeting support for them. The EMA grant is being well used in employing an EAL teacher. There are teaching assistants, who also provide support for EAL pupils. Professional development and training for the teaching of EAL have helped teachers to develop greater awareness of their needs since the last inspection. There is a strategic team to support the work under the EMA grant.

67. The quality of EAL teaching is good with a strong focus on speaking and listening. As a result, pupils make good progress. Progress is very good in Years 5 and 6 where class teachers make very strong contributions to pupils' learning. Pupils achieve well in literacy skills by Year 2, particularly in speaking and listening through planned opportunities in lessons. This progress continues and towards the end of Year 6, most EAL pupils have acquired the necessary language skills to participate actively in lessons and achieve well in the national tests. EAL pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and other subjects of the curriculum because of teachers' emphasis on language development. In subjects such as physical education, mathematics and science, teachers skilfully use demonstration and visual resources so that EAL pupils can attach words to objects and actions. Class teachers ensure that EAL pupils understand the language used in the lesson.

68. EAL teaching consists of supporting EAL pupils in the classroom as well as small group work out of lessons. The quality of in-class support is well planned and effective and pupils make good progress in acquiring the language and content of the lesson. In the lessons observed, the EAL teacher showed a secure knowledge of how to develop the English language skills and understanding of a group of EAL pupils through discussion, visual images and a list of identified

words. There was a clear focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for group work, the EAL teacher uses suitable methods and visual resources to develop pupils' understanding in English. There are opportunities for them to try out new language and develop confidence in speaking and listening.

69. The school has not yet implemented the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's extended scale for assessment, though the needs of EAL pupils are assessed on the English fluency scale and information is shared with class teachers. However, there are some weaknesses. There is a mismatch between the assessment using the stages of fluency and the National Curriculum levels achieved by EAL pupils. The needs of EAL pupils in the Foundation Stage are not accurately assessed, as nearly all pupils with EAL are recorded as early stage EAL learners, which is not always the case.
70. There is good support for children from asylum-seeking families and other new arrivals to help them settle into the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff support individual pupils effectively and give them a sense of security. The school has developed some effective links with parents of EAL pupils. There is a parents' workshop in the Foundation Stage and the school runs this and the Family Learning workshop jointly with the Centre for Language in Primary Education.
71. There are extra-curricular opportunities that contribute to EAL pupils' development of self-esteem and confidence. The school invites writers, story-tellers and poets from different cultures, who provide good role models for these pupils. Within the creative arts curriculum, which includes art, design and technology and drama, teachers use innovative methods to help pupils with English as an additional language for example, the work done with puppets where pupils are given opportunities to speak out in class through the character of a puppet - a most successful strategy. The school has recorded examples of this work and its impact on both language and self-esteem.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

82

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	31	35	10	0	0	0
Percentage	7	38	43	12	0	0	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	281
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	116

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	84

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	220

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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
	2002	22	14	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	22
	Girls	10	13	14
	Total	28	32	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (88)	89 (95)	100 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	19
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	31	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	92 (93)	89 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	18
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	27	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (89)	84 (81)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	15
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	24	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (70)	82 (59)	88 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
33	1	0
3	0	0
8	0	0
11	0	0
8	0	0
1	0	0
12	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
35	0	0
3	0	0
27	0	0
106	9	0
11	2	0
0	0	0
16	0	0
7	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	367

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	36
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	966697
Total expenditure	989347
Expenditure per pupil	3400
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 49223
Balance carried forward to next year	- 71873

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	305
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	72	23	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	51	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	33	8	0	3
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	28	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	67	26	3	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	69	26	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	31	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	36	5	0	5

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

72. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and good progress in Reception classes because the quality of teaching and provision is good. This is good improvement since the last inspection. When they enter the Nursery, children's attainment, though varied, is overall below expectations for their age. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the majority of children are likely to attain expected levels in the areas of personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Most children are likely to achieve higher than the expected levels in creative development because of the very good provision and teaching in the areas of music and art.
73. The Nursery has 45 children with 15 attending full time and 20 attending the two part-time sessions. Forty-six children attend the Reception classes. Most of these children are learning English as an additional language, but they are not on the very early stages of acquiring English as shown by the school's assessment procedures. Parents are invited into school with their children before they start. Good induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle into the routines. The Nursery outdoor area, although small, is used well to extend the curriculum. Children transfer to two Reception classes in September and January. There is no outdoor area for these children and this lack of space hinders their learning through first-hand experiences. For example, during an art lesson they did not have enough space to work.
74. The school follows the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum and teachers and their assistants plan effectively in all six areas of learning. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery with some good lessons seen. This shows an improvement from the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is never less than good in the Reception classes and some very good lessons were seen and, as a result, children make good progress. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are having a positive impact on children's learning in the Reception classes and they make good progress in these skills. Support for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. Teachers place appropriately strong emphasis on ways to improve children's personal, social and emotional skills, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Observation and recording are used well to inform planning and assess children's progress and attainment. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and this leads to children being purposefully involved in a calm and quiet learning atmosphere. Where teaching is good, teachers use appropriate methods, such as visual materials, modelling language and asking children to repeat words and phrases. They use praise effectively to motivate the children.
75. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and attainment in all six areas of learning through the termly meetings and the end of year reports.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and is promoted at every opportunity. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to attain the expected standards.
77. In the Nursery, most children settle well and enjoy the Nursery experience. They quickly adapt to the routines of the day, make friends with other children and show confidence in the staff. They are encouraged to work co-operatively, and take responsibility for themselves. Children are well motivated and apply themselves well to tasks. They have good relationships and show good consideration for the needs of others. For example, when children work with Year 5 pupils, they show respect for each other and share their aprons in painting sessions and remind each other when it is their turn to play musical instruments and sing in music lessons. They help each other to tidy up at the end of the activities.

78. Children are very well behaved; they concentrate very well and sit appropriately in whole class sessions, for example when staff explain the activities and during story times and singing sessions. They are learning to share the equipment fairly and wait for their turn to use the computer, the climbing frame or have their turn in their flower shop. Children are independent in their personal hygiene and put on their own aprons and coats when they go home. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Children of all ethnic backgrounds play happily together.
79. In Reception classes, children respond well to a more formal structure during literacy and numeracy sessions. They are familiar with classroom routines, move sensibly to appropriate tasks and concentrate very well for their age. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this area is good. Children achieve well because they are constantly encouraged to develop high levels of independence. All adults provide good role models, and there are good relationships between adults and children. Children are treated with courtesy and respect, and in turn learn to behave in the same way. Children are provided with a secure, caring environment where they flourish.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Children's achievement is good in this area of learning. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the expected levels and the more able exceed them. When children enter the Nursery, their weakest skills are in English speaking and vocabulary. However, they concentrate very well, listen hard and make satisfactory progress. They enjoy listening to stories and learn to express their views mostly in phrases. Most children look at pictures, but are not able to sequence the story from the pictures because they do not have the essential basic vocabulary.
81. Children in the Reception classes make good progress. Their phonic skills are well developed because of good emphasis in teaching. Most children handle books correctly, and are beginning to use picture cues to tell a story, read some familiar words in a text and are beginning to use phonic skills to build unfamiliar words. They are beginning to spell some three-letter words correctly. More able children read quite well and have a good sight vocabulary. Their attainment exceeds the expected levels. Most children are developing their writing skills well. They are able to construct a simple sentence and write some recognisable words to convey the intended meaning. More able children use their phonic skills and can spell at least three-letter words correctly and attempt longer words confidently. They draw and paint with increasing control. Their handwriting skills are good: they can form letters correctly and write neatly and legibly.
82. The overall quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory in the Nursery and good in Reception classes. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children are given many opportunities to draw and learn to write. Considering the large number of children who speak English as an additional language, Nursery staff do not consistently place sufficient emphasis on developing children's literacy skills such as by choosing reading and writing as one of the focus areas. This hinders progress. Reception teachers successfully introduce the children to the literacy strategy and the systematic teaching of phonic skills helps them with their reading and spelling. Children take books home to read regularly and Reception children take key words as well and this supports their development in reading.

Mathematical development

83. By the end of Reception year, children's mathematical development is appropriate for their age and the more able attain higher standards. The progress they make is satisfactory in the Nursery and good in the Reception classes. This is because of the good provision and teaching they receive in the Reception classes. In the Nursery, children match, sort and count using everyday objects. They learn to count and recognise numbers to 10. Children in the Reception classes have opportunities to take part in well-planned practical activities and recognise and write number symbols correctly and learn their value. Most children can count to 20 in a range of situations and more able children count to hundred and some can count in tens. More able children use objects to add and some can subtract numbers to 10. They can name simple two- and three-dimensional objects.

84. Mathematics is taught across the curriculum, as well as in specific lessons. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the nursery with good lessons seen in reception classes. Here, there are whole class numeracy sessions each day, where children continue to focus on counting and recognising numbers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan well with clear learning objectives, which they share with the children. In group-work children's needs are well targeted. Children with below average attainment are well supported by teaching assistants. Staff assess the children's progress well, and use this to plan next steps in learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and children make good progress. As a result, at the end of Reception year, most children attain standards expected for their age and the more able exceed them. In the Nursery, children learn the push and pull movements when they use rollers to paint. They learn about their families when they draw and write about them. Experiences such as planting cress, weeding and planting flowers and making cakes make children's learning meaningful. When using the computer, children learn to manipulate the mouse to operate the program on the screen. They learn about a variety of materials when using construction toys, sand, water and play-dough. Children learn that water freezes into ice and changes back to water when heated. In Reception classes, children learn about the past when they compare themselves with when they were babies. They learn about their locality through visits to the local shops. Children visit the local park to collect mini-beasts, they use magnifying mirrors to observe and learn about their body parts. The displays in the classrooms further help children to understand their habitats. Children learn about faiths through the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Diwali, Hanukah and Chinese New Year. Overall teaching and learning are good. Most adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to solve problems.

Physical development

86. By the end of Reception year, the children's physical development is appropriate for their age. There is good provision both indoors and outdoors for Nursery children to develop their physical skills. Children show good awareness of space and control when they use the climbing frame. They use the large apparatus to climb and balance. Nursery children moved with good control, co-ordination and enjoyment when they walked across benches and went through the tunnel. However, limited outdoor space does not allow children to use wheeled toys and explore space imaginatively. Reception children have opportunities to improve their skills in running, jumping and climbing. In one lesson in the hall, children were exploring ways of running, for example on heels and on toes. Most children handle pencils, brushes, glue spreaders, craft tools, puzzles and construction kits appropriately. Many control the computer mouse well. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are given regular access to well organised activities to further develop the skills gained in the Nursery.

Creative development

87. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities that stimulate their imagination and enable them to make very good progress particularly in music and art. Their attainment by the end of Reception year is above expectations, mainly due to very good specialist teaching. In the role play areas, Reception class children had opportunities to dress as vets and use appropriate instruments to treat toy animals. They write down symptoms of the illness, make appointments and give injections to cure pets. They use pencils, felt pens, crayons and paints confidently to present their ideas through drawing, painting, printing and modelling. They experiment with a range of art materials and techniques when they print, make collage pictures and learn to mix colours. In whole-class sessions, they sing songs and action rhymes supported by the music specialist and the teaching staff. Children's knowledge of nursery and action rhymes is very good. In one lesson, Reception children sang in tune keeping the fast and slow rhythm and had very good recall memory of the words of the song. In one excellent assembly, Nursery children worked with Year 5. They used their voices expressively through singing songs and speaking and kept the correct pitch, duration, tempo and dynamics.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children are given very good opportunities to experiment with materials and to make their own creative responses. The music specialist skilfully teaches the rhythm and words of the songs and involves all children in singing.

ENGLISH

89. Standards in English are improving across the school. In 2002, the National Curriculum test results for the pupils were below average in reading, but average in writing at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6 standards achieved were average, although they were lower than the results of the previous year. Inspection findings show that standards are now average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. In the current Year 6, inspection evidence shows that over four-fifths of the pupils are reaching the nationally expected level or above, including about a quarter reaching higher levels. Although many pupils have special educational needs in literacy in the current Year 6, pupils' achievement is good in relation to the same pupils' attainment in writing on entry to Year 3.
90. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in English, but make good progress in communication, language and literacy in the Foundation Stage and start Year 1 with average standards in English. However, these standards are then affected by pupils joining the school at various times during the school year, many of whom speak English as an additional language and are at various stages of English acquisition. Pupils achieve well in English during their time at the school and reach expected standards for their age by Years 2 and 6. By Year 6, pupils achieve above average standards in speaking and listening because of the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
91. The school has introduced opportunities for speaking and listening across the school, which have made an impact on pupils' attainment. Pupils speak and listen well in Years 1 and 2, reaching average standards. The pupils in Year 2 listen attentively and speak with confidence in whole class sessions. As pupils move up the school, they achieve very well, developing these skills very effectively. Teaching offers pupils opportunities to work in pairs and groups, which help them to learn to collaborate and discuss. By the time they are in Year 6, their speaking and listening skills are above average for their age. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed in pairs the similarities and contrasts between the settings in the story *Mamo on the Mountain* using appropriate vocabulary. One of the pupils described Mamo's mountain as 'quiet, isolated and peaceful'. This was a result of the teaching that ensured through a quick recap that the pupils knew about settings in the story and how to describe their qualities. The choice of the story, set in Ethiopia, offered pupils the opportunity to show empathy with a people and community outside Britain. Pupils, particularly those of African origin, participated well in the discussion. English makes a very important contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development through the collaborative group work and discussion on stories from different cultures.
92. Standards in reading are broadly average in Year 2; the focus on the teaching of phonics in Years 1 to 2 helps the pupils to learn letter-sounds effectively and apply them well. They develop an understanding of what they read through discussions. Higher and average-attaining pupils read aloud with accuracy and understanding, and talk about the characters and main events of the story. They are able to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction books. Lower-attaining pupils know letter sounds and are able to use them in reading unfamiliar words, though often find it difficult to talk about the books they read. Pupils from an early age know such terms as 'author' and 'illustrator', and as they get older identify their favourite author, discuss characters and predict what will happen next. Pupils across the school learn to write book reviews, giving their views about the books they read.
93. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in their reading. In lessons, teachers frequently check pupils' understanding through a range of questions that extend their understanding of books. Standards in reading in Year 6 are in line with national expectations. There are higher-attaining pupils who read fluently and accurately with expression and understanding and reach very secure standards for their age. Although lower-attaining pupils are not fluent readers they have satisfactory knowledge of letter sounds to read accurately and sound out unfamiliar words. Many of the pupils have favourite authors such as JK Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. They are able to talk about the contrast between the magical world of Rowling and the real life situations of

school-age girls in Wilson's writing. The pupils acquire satisfactory library skills to locate information from books and other written sources. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to, and enjoy, reading.

94. Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 2. The writing seen in Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils are learning to write at length for a range of purposes. Year 2 pupils write lists, instructions, letters, book reviews, character profiles, stories and poems. As teaching reminds pupils how to improve sentences, they learn to write in grammatically correct sentences with punctuation appropriate for their age. In writing book reviews, they are able to give reasons for their choice using words such as 'because'. Spelling and handwriting are satisfactory. The pupils in Year 1 show good progress as some of them already reach beyond the level expected for their age.
95. By Year 6, standards in writing are also at least average. Work seen in pupils' books in Year 6 shows that the pupils write at length, sustaining ideas and using grammatically correct complex sentences to extend meaning. They show a good grasp of grammar and punctuation. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 are learning to write for a range of purposes and achieve standards appropriate for their age. They write journals, diaries, letters, stories, news, character descriptions and arguments. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils showed good knowledge of writing skills and explained the use of short sentences in creating tension. Some of their creative writing is varied and imaginative. One Year 6 pupil has written a mystery story called 'A Tap on the Shoulder', which is highly imaginative with language that captures the atmosphere and creates an impact on the reader, for example, "The town is now empty and echoing in silence from the parents' call." or "He came face to face with two blue pulsating shadows." By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of useful strategies to help with spellings. Handwriting is joined-up and fluent for most pupils in Year 6.
96. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 with some very good and exceptional teaching in Years 5 and 6. Much of the teaching in Years 5 and 6 is strong and sometimes very dynamic where the teachers maintain a brisk pace through well-planned, timed activities. In a Year 5 lesson, the quality of teaching was exceptional with very well prepared stimulating activities that integrated drama, speaking and listening and writing very effectively. The teacher made excellent use of mime to explain abstract words such as 'mercy', 'fear' and 'tense' to EAL pupils who made excellent progress in the lesson. The pupils showed very good understanding of how to make complex sentences using clauses. Across the school, lessons are well planned indicating that teachers have secure subject knowledge. The teachers use questions skilfully to build on what pupils know. Recap of previous learning is a strong feature in all lessons. Pupils are keen to show what they can remember and are ready to learn new things. Teachers have high expectations of the work and behaviour of their pupils and manage them effectively and ensure that all pupils are included in the lesson. Consequently, their behaviour is good.
97. Teachers work very effectively in partnership with the special educational needs (SEN) assistants and EAL teachers. Pupils with SEN have individual education plans with clear targets in literacy, which are followed carefully, and they make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress in Years 1 to 4, and very good progress in Years 5 and 6. The EAL teacher provides good in-class support to give EAL pupils access to lessons through pictures, explanation and the language required for the lesson.
98. Subject co-ordination is good. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy. English is used and developed well through other subjects of the curriculum. There are good examples of the use of literacy across the curriculum, for example, pupils are encouraged to write for different purposes in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The use of ICT is good in English, where pupils use it to find information as well as to word-process their work. There are good systems and procedures for assessment. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. The school has maintained its standards in reading and writing and raised standards in speaking and listening by offering pupils planned opportunities for speaking and listening across the school. Teaching has improved in Years 3 and 4. The subject makes very good contributions to pupils' cultural development by offering them opportunities to observe and participate in writing competitions, debates, theatres and dramas.

MATHEMATICS

99. Standards in mathematics have continued to rise throughout the school since the last inspection. This is because of very good teaching, which is pitched at the level of higher attaining pupils but accessible to all pupils, and by very good management of the subject.
100. The results of the national tests in 2002 were much better than those of 2001 for pupils in Year 2. All pupils attained the nationally expected standard and all but one pupil achieved levels above national expectations. These results were very high compared with the national average with only one school in twenty achieving similar levels. Over the three years from 2000 to 2001 boys' results have been better than those of girls, although girls' results have also exceeded the national average. Over this same period, the trend of improvement has been greater than the national trend. Achievement in the present Year 2 is not as high as last although most pupils continue to reach standards above national expectations.
101. Pupils in Year 6 achieved better than the national average in the 2002 national tests, with over four-fifths achieving the expected level and over a third achieving higher levels. These results, which are very high compared with similar schools, build on the outcomes of the 2001 test where, for the first time, pupils at Charles Dickens outperformed the national average. Based on the performance of pupils currently in Year 6, which consolidates the achievements of the previous year, the trend for the three years 2001 – 2003 is likely to be above the national average.
102. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were attaining slightly below the levels of the previous year, but still above average levels. Most pupils, including those who are acquiring English as an additional language make good progress. The quality of learning support for pupils with special educational needs is good and most of them make good progress in their learning. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well and nearly all, including those acquiring English, make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well-supported in their access to the curriculum and they make good progress.
103. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. They can add, subtract and multiply with confidence. They understand place value in tens and units and are acquiring sound mathematical language using terms such as 'multiple' and 'digit'. They acquire knowledge of their multiplication tables confidently, and older pupils build on their knowledge and skills. They are good at identifying number patterns and are beginning to think about what these mean. They understand that multiplication is "repeated addition" and can use mental recall to derive associated division facts, for example that you can make 9 lots of 5 from 45.
104. This good progress is sustained in Years 3 and 4. Pupils understand and can name lines of symmetry and know that angles can be measured in degrees. They understand that a quarter turn is 90 degrees and a half turn 180 degrees. They can recognise obtuse and acute angles and place these in size order. They manipulate numbers confidently, being able to double three-digit numbers and respond enthusiastically to challenges set by their teacher, for example to find out what an isosceles triangle is. They have a keen enjoyment of mathematical language when classifying 2-D shapes. By Years 5 and 6, pupils have a good sense of number. They can move between fractions and percentages with comparative ease and understand that these concepts are related to ratio. They use their knowledge to develop new insights into number patterns, for example, one pupil observed that in the ratio 3:9 one element will always be a third of the other. Higher achieving pupils set mathematical challenges for themselves. They can explain methods they have used to solve problems and write lucid accounts of their investigations.
105. Pupils use their number skills competently in other subjects of the curriculum. In geography they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to plot their journey from home to school. In a survey on car pollution, using data they had collected, pupils manipulated numbers up to six and seven digits to estimate the number of vehicles entering London over various periods of time. In science, pupils use number skills to prepare and carry out experiments, including calculating the force needed to move a trainer down a ramp in Newtons.
106. The quality of teaching is very good, especially in Years 3 to 6 and has improved since the last inspection. Most lessons begin with pacy and demanding mental and oral work, followed by

precise, well-structured teaching where nothing is left to chance. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources including ICT programmes, number lines and squares and materials they have made themselves to stimulate pupils' interest. Plenaries at the end of the class are well used not only to summarise what pupils have learned but often to extend their learning in other directions, for example by introducing the idea of classification using a Venn diagram to extend pupils' understanding of angles.

107. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is outstanding. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils so that disruptive behaviour is kept to a minimum and is discouraged by the pupils themselves. A characteristic of the best teaching is that lessons are pitched at the highest achieving pupils, while being accessible to all. Teachers draw on pupils' contributions to develop their teaching points. As a result, pupils become confident and able partners in their learning. Good support is offered in class to pupils with special educational needs, most of whom make good progress in their work.
108. Mathematics is very well managed. There is a comprehensive action plan which has been implemented effectively. Sound strategies, including lesson observations by the co-ordinator and senior managers, demonstration lessons and work sampling and levelling have been used to raise expectations and improve the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator has kept abreast of research, shared this with colleagues in professional development sessions and taken appropriate action, for example in developing an effective whole school policy on calculation.

SCIENCE

109. Standards are in line with the national average for seven and 11-year-old pupils with more able pupils achieving above average standards. This reflects satisfactory improvement from the previous inspection that also judged standards as average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress as a result of good teaching. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress. This indicates good progress since the previous inspection when progress for Years 3 and 4 was lower than that made by Years 5 and 6 pupils. The national test results for 2002, for Year 6 pupils, were well above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. In the teacher assessments in 2002, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was in line with the national expectations. This reflects the attainment of the current cohort as well.
110. By the end of Year 2, pupils investigate how the pitch of notes changes and can make instruments that give high and low sounds and explain the reasons for the different pitch accurately. In the study of plants, pupils had grown beans and cress and had experimented to find out that plants need water and light to grow. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills to record their predictions, and numeracy skills to draw tables and graphs to present their findings.
111. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good experiences in conducting a fair test. They plan their tests, predict, investigate and record their findings and draw conclusions. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils had investigated the processes involved in making a controllable vehicle and concluded that the turn of the wheel depended on the size of the gear and that the more powerful the battery, the faster the motor works. They used appropriate vocabulary such as "axle", "gear", "friction", "clockwise" and "anti-clockwise". Year 5 pupils investigated whether the type of battery, wire and other components such as size of bulbs, buzzers and motors affected the brightness of the light. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well.
112. Pupils who speak English as an additional language with good support from the additional teacher were able to understand the scientific vocabulary and made good progress. Pupils who have learning difficulties also made good progress as result of good support. The presentation of pupils' work and the amount of written work show that in many lessons, pupils tend to work at the same tasks and there is little indication of challenging or independent work in science, particularly for more able pupils. Pupils are being given useful opportunities to draw their own charts, diagrams and graphs and teachers have high expectations about pupils' presentation and the development of their scientific knowledge.

113. Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching is very good. It is better in Years 3 to 6 classes than in Years 1 and 2, although all lessons seen were at least good. Teachers' planning is very good and based on good subject knowledge. Teachers share the objectives of the lessons with pupils and refer to these during the lessons to ensure that pupils are successfully achieving them. They manage their pupils very well and use support staff and resources to the best advantage of their pupils. In most lessons, a balance of direct teaching and practical activities is very well achieved. Scientific vocabulary is emphasised and pupils are expected to use this appropriately in their questions and replies. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils used vocabulary such as "surface", "force", "pull", "force-meter" and "Newtons" appropriately while experimenting to find out how the type of surface affected the force needed to move an object. The teacher let the pupils feel different surfaces before they used the force-meter to measure the force needed to move a trolley. This had a good impact on pupils' learning. The additional support teacher was used very well for the benefit of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils understood the vocabulary well and this enabled them to understand the concept.
114. Good use is made of ICT to extend pupils' learning. They are given opportunities to use CD-ROMs and the Internet for research. They use computers and manipulate text and images to write their experiments, draw tables and graphs and to present information. For example, Year 5 had drawn a line graph to show how the amount of water affects the length of roots.
115. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make good progress, often with individual support from the class teacher or from learning assistants. Pupils' personal development is supported well by positive relationships with class teachers and support staff and relationships between pupils. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups. The subject contributes well towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result of very good teaching, pupils in all lessons are well behaved. They concentrate and persevere with their work and achieve good results.
116. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and encouraging comments are used effectively to take pupils' learning forward. Teachers use displays of pupils' work well to support learning. The curriculum is also well supported by educational visits and visitors to school. There is an effective science scheme. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well. However, there are no set procedures to track pupils' individual progress and attainment. Similarly, there is no recording of assessment after units of study are completed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. There are good resources for science and the school has a good science resource room that is well used.

ART AND DESIGN

117. The school identifies this part of the curriculum as creative art with strong links to drama. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above expectation and achievement is good because of excellent planning and the wide range of professional input from artists, print makers, dancers and actors, to raise pupils' and parents' ambitions. By the end of Year 6, further exciting opportunities to develop pupils' creativity produces standards well above expectation and very good achievement that lifts confidence and self-esteem. This is having an impressive impact on learning throughout the school. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special needs achieve in line with their classmates because planning includes communication skills. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and built on.
118. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to exploit ideas and handle many different materials in their artwork. They experiment with different textures and colours. Observational sketches are good. Classrooms are well resourced with sharp pencils, colouring crayons, paint, and tools to use with clay modelling, so pupils can experiment with mark making, line and form. Pupils use a range of visual stimuli to prompt ideas; they often use nature as an inspiration and also use stories for starter ideas. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have been reading the story *Owl Babies*; this stimulated interest in making a sculpture of their favourite owl baby. Results were very exciting; pupils' work was well proportioned with tools being used to create feather textures on the clay. The class

went on to evaluate their work, but were not always sure about how to improve despite being keen to comment on each others work and compare their results with models of owls on display in the classroom. Some pupils with English as an additional language proudly performed an impromptu short puppet show based on the *Owl Babies* story, to the delight of the rest of the class.

119. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use their sketch books well - trying out ideas and tracking their own progress as artists. In Year 6, pinch and coil pots, designed to be a magical container to hold 'wishes', were innovative in shape with interesting tactile qualities introduced through surface patterns using tools and clay swirls. Exploring actual pots, books and magazines as well as the Internet, inspired pupils' ideas. Brilliant thinking and discussion encouraged pupils to share ideas on shape and form. They used visual references from history and different cultures to extend their design ideas. Where pupils struggled with handling the clay, staff made positive interventions. Some pupils missed the chance to record changes in their design. Work with visiting artists is making an important contribution to creative art. High quality displays across the school showing printing, painting and drawing is illustrating the impact art can have on learning in other curriculum areas, for example, the wonderful raging images of the Great Fire of London from pupils' history work.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. At this stage, pupils' techniques strengthen and independent creativity accelerates. Targets for the lessons are understood and pupils are driven to improve because teachers demonstrate high quality practical expertise with a dash of passion, to encourage pupils to take risks with exciting and different uses of the materials available. Planning, involving other adults giving classroom support, enhanced learning. Adult intervention was used to stimulate thinking by monitoring progress, or praising pupils' ideas. Effective questions were used to raise pupils' understanding of how artists work. Pupils learn mature art appreciation because teachers seize chances to expose pupils to the real world of art through their involvement with the Education Action Zone. This initiative helps teachers plan visits to galleries like the Tate Modern and theatres like The Globe to broaden pupils' creative experiences and help them think 'outside the box'.
121. From displays and pupil discussions, it was clear pupils see creative arts as a passport to success in all areas of the curriculum, including art clubs. Well-planned visits have made a lasting impact on their personal development. Year 5 pupils attributed their confidence and enjoyment of discussion, debate and personal evaluation to participation in out-of-school workshops.
122. Leadership and management of this curriculum area are outstanding. Management is collaborative and works with the skills of the teaching and non-teaching team to nurture the value of creativity in the curriculum. Lateral thinking by the subject leader supported by proactive governors and like-minded senior management team is driving the aspirations of the parents and pupils to break barriers to community education, thus promoting life-long learning for pupils and their families.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Standards in design and technology by the end of Year 2 are good and achievement is good. By Year 6, standards of work are above average and achievement is very good. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Identification of gifted and talented pupils is at an early stage of development. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
124. In Years 1 and 2, pupils handle a range of materials, including textiles and food. There are lots of modelling opportunities to explore ideas. Often, planned overlap with art and design is used productively to improve designing and making, for example the large scale model of a Viking longboat, created by a group working with the artist in residence, considered how boats were constructed in early times and what made the boat buoyant. Pupils draw and describe what they want to do, often writing new ideas onto their plans. They use appropriately sized hand tools such as coping saws. Some pupils in Year 2 struggle to use scissors accurately indicating a

need to review skills each year. Pupils can speak about what they have made, making suggestions of what to improve.

125. By Year 6, pupils have acquired a range of skills that challenge their independent designing and making. Their designing has improved. This has been supported by exciting projects run by the Design Museum where thought-provoking tasks, for example to 'design a shoe for a personality' produced extravagant and beautiful shoe designs and models showing flair in designing as well as practical fastenings. Designs were well labelled to describe materials used and modifications made by the pupils. Additional sketches recorded changes made in their designs that illustrated good working knowledge of the characteristics of their chosen materials. Pupils work safely and with good organisation, showing responsibility for clearing up at the end of sessions. Pupils understand how evaluation can improve design and class discussion often influences the final product.
126. Teaching and learning in design and technology are very good overall. Teachers have used the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) units of work as a basis for their planning, which is very good and well supported by the new co-ordinator for the subject. Teaching and learning methods are a partnership between classroom assistants, visitors and teachers ensuring that short-term targets and lively teaching approaches keep pupils on task. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are generally good though variable because some lack subject specialist knowledge. However, the co-ordinator is using in-service training to foster teachers designing and making skills.
127. Expectations of behaviour and work ethic are high, especially in Years 3 to 6, and are underpinned by very good displays. Improvements through very good whole class and individual evaluation highlight pupils' creativity. Numeracy skills develop very well, for example Year 4's celebration card used many skills in measuring, making accurate cuts and folds to produce a card with a moving mechanism to make it more fun. Pupils develop key words for design and making that help them describe and analyse their product. Well planned use of computers, for example in work on the design of a moving vehicle, challenges thinking and problem-solving. Pupils collaborate and negotiate the use of tools and space and enjoy working on team projects. Behaviour is good because learning has purpose.
128. Co-ordination and management of the subject are good. Tracking and monitoring are being piloted. The co-ordinator has overhauled all equipment and materials to ensure that the teaching of the subject is well organised and effective. Risk assessment and good health and safety practices are in place. Storage for consumable resources and completed projects is a difficulty across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Four lessons were observed in geography. Further evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of work sampled in each class, displays on walls and discussions with pupils and teachers. Although standards attained in the lessons observed are average, evidence from books indicates that standards over time are a little below average because the curriculum is not planned to ensure that pupils develop their geographical skills. Progress since the last inspection has therefore been slight and further improvement is necessary.
130. The teaching of geography is good. In Years 1 and 2 teachers work from the locality, using familiar sites to encourage children to think about how buildings are used and how this use can change over time. Opportunities are taken to extend pupils' skills in speaking and listening and to gain experience in working in groups to tackle questions set by the teacher. In Year 4, pupils were taught about traffic pollution in London and used their skills as mathematicians to analyse the impact of congestion charging on traffic flow in the city. In Year 5, when learning about a river journey, pupils made good use of technology to project a photograph of a river and to show an animated clip of flooding. Classroom display underlined the social, political and historical importance of rivers. Pupils were encouraged to develop their ideas through structured discussions in groups or pairs considering such issues as what activities can pollute a river. One pupil used his knowledge of Ancient Egypt to illustrate the role of flooding in fertilising agricultural

land. However, despite the best efforts of the teacher, pupils found it difficult to understand how an oxbow lake is formed because of their lack of prior learning in physical geography.

131. Imaginative opportunities are taken to make links with other subjects of the curriculum including science and art, and to take children on visits in the locality and more widely. While these provide enriching learning experiences, they are not always effective as a means of developing pupils' skills as geographers. For example, although the work done with an artist in residence on mapping produced very attractive prints, there was no evidence that it had deepened pupils' understanding of mapmaking.
132. Evidence from pupils' books indicates that they are not taught enough geography and that some topics are not taught in sufficient depth. This is partly because the scheme of work, while it covers the National Curriculum programme of study, does so by adopting an "activities and key questions" approach, which does not make sufficiently clear expectations of what pupils should be able to do and how this builds on their previous learning. This is reflected in teachers' short-term planning where learning outcomes may be indicated in terms of activities, for example "children will design a poster to show how pollution damages Southwark Cathedral" or may be pitched at too low a level, for example "point to the UK on a map of the world and label London on a map of the UK using an atlas" (Years 3 and 4).
133. The co-ordinators, who have recently taken responsibility for geography, are keen and enthusiastic. They have started work adapting the QCA scheme of work for the school. It is important in doing so that they give proper emphasis to the development of geographical knowledge and skills if this is to be an effective means of raising achievement in the subject. Although they monitor teachers' planning for coverage of the curriculum, there is a need to extend this to lesson observation and work sampling to develop a clearer understanding of the standards currently being achieved.

HISTORY

134. During the inspection week, teaching was seen in only Years 3 and 4 classes. The evidence gathered from this and analysis of pupils' recorded work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff indicate that pupils' attainment at age seven and 11 is in line with national expectations. Pupils including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
135. Seven-year-old pupils are confident in using historical terminology such as 'past' and 'present' and identify changes that have taken place over time in, for example, the structure and the design of homes through the study of The Great Fire of London of 1666. They have a good understanding of the need to use evidence to come to a conclusion and know the differences between primary and secondary sources of evidence and information. They used Pepys' diary to get information about 'The Plague' and 'The Great Fire'.
136. By the age of 11, most pupils have some knowledge of a range of historical periods, such as those of the Victorians, Tudors, Vikings and Ancient Greeks. Pupils are able to make good connections between different periods studied and recognise changes within them. For example, Year 6 pupils have many opportunities to compare their school life with that of Victorian children. They researched the differences and similarities using books and the Internet. They compared the lives of rich and poor children. Pupils are developing a good understanding of social history and the effect of class on life style and life expectancy.
137. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils of all ages. In one lesson where teaching was good, the teacher had planned the lesson well using her expertise in the subject. She shared the learning objectives with pupils so they all knew what they were learning and checked progress at the end. Teacher had high expectations of pupils' rate of progress and behaviour and pupils responded positively to this. Good questioning such as 'Why do people move from one place to another?' led to a good discussion on why Vikings attacked England.

Good use of the video to show the marshy and mountainous land gave pupils an insight into the need for Vikings to explore other lands.

138. Good use of visits and visitors supports all pupils' learning, including those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss work in pairs and groups and this supports pupils' social development. The subject contributes well towards pupils' cultural, moral and spiritual development. However, teaching does not often emphasise that the past can be represented and interpreted in different ways.
139. The co-ordinators provide satisfactory leadership and manage the subject well. Book resources and artefacts are sufficient. An appropriate scheme of work is in place. There is a long-term overview of topics and detailed guidance to support teachers' planning. History is taught in rotation with geography and there are some good links with other subjects such as art and design and technology. Good use is made of ICT such as the Internet and CD-ROMs, for gathering information. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used. Assessment and recording procedures are not yet developed systematically to enable individual pupils' progress and attainment to be tracked, though targets for improvement are set. There is currently little checking of teaching and learning to identify and rectify any weaknesses. This is largely because the school is focusing on the development of other curriculum areas.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were judged to be high. Inspection evidence confirms that this situation has been maintained. Standards by Year 2 are in line with expectation and achievement is good. By Year 6, pupils' standards are above expectation and achievement continues to be good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language match the achievements of other pupils. Higher ability pupils are given extension work. Boys and girls achieve similarly.
141. By Year 2, pupils are aware of how to type, insert text and use the return bar to create a new text line. They develop good hand-eye co-ordination, using the mouse effectively to control the cursor, but key boarding skills are low level and pupils spend a long time hunting for letters they need to use. They use robots effectively to create and follow routes and patterns. Pupils learn through experimenting with the computer icons; there was great excitement in one lesson where pupils learned to bullet point the shopping list they had created and even change the colour of the text. They can use paint programmes to create images and spreadsheets to help mathematical investigations. Some pupils appreciate the use of the undo button and know that it is easy to correct mistakes on the computer.
142. By the end of Year 6, pupils have become more confident users of ICT. Technical terms are used well. Year 4 pupils demonstrated inspired use, as they took on a commercial project to design a poster to advertise a new range of trainers. High quality research for suitable clip art and learning to use text boxes combined with alliteration (Tip Top Trainers) enabled pupils to produce high quality posters ready to be modified through class discussion. Pupils seek out information on the Internet to use in their topics. Successful Internet research for the 'Victorians' creative arts work between Year 5 and the nursery made the presentation more authentic. Pupils use e-mail to communicate with others. They are competent users of spreadsheets and databases to collect and analyse information gained from activities such as traffic surveys. They go on to convert those data using the graph wizard so they can share information with a wider audience. The 'living wall' celebrating computer skills across the school sets high standards.
143. Teaching and learning are very good overall with some excellent practice seen in Year 4. Very good planning and teachers' computer capability make pupils active learners which strengthens their skills and understanding. Very good step-by-step teacher demonstrations make a huge impact on learning. Demanding question and answer techniques recap on previous learning and challenge pupils to extend their skills. Pupils concentrate well and teachers encourage pupils to teach each other. In ICT lessons, shared computer use reduces the hands-on practice for all, but the effective use of skilled classroom assistants enables teachers to rotate groups through the

ICT suite, improving pupils' access to computers. Assessment and tracking are developing well and self-assessment has been piloted ready to be introduced. Classroom computers are not used as effectively. There is no strategy to track weekly use for all pupils. An annual audit of staff ICT skills ensures that teachers can highlight their training needs.

144. Pupils have developed very good work habits; they listen carefully and enjoy using computers. Behaviour is very good because activities planned are pupil friendly. The success pupils see in their work on screen boosts their self-belief.
145. Leadership of the subject is outstanding and has benefited from local and national courses bringing the school to the cutting edge of new technology, for example, the purchase of new hand-held mini video cameras for the school's film making club and interactive white boards to enhance class teaching. However management of the subject is impeded by the lack of time or structure to monitor and support consistency of computer use across the school.

MUSIC

146. The high quality music provision is a strength of the school. Standards of attainment are above the levels expected for pupils aged seven and 11. This represents a similar picture to the last inspection. Pupils benefit significantly from the expert knowledge and planning of the subject specialists, who teach music to all classes.
147. The quality of teaching and learning is very high. Of the eight lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was excellent in one, very good in five and good in two lessons. Guided by this quality of teaching, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing in tune with expression and perform rhythmically simple parts requiring a good range of notes. Pupils quickly learn the words to songs and, because of the teachers' high expectations, they listen attentively to recall sounds with developing aural memory. Pupils are highly motivated through effective use of drama and use of percussion instruments to rehearse and to perform for an audience. As a result of the very good learning provision, pupils make very good progress and by the end of Year 2, they recognise how pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, timbre and texture can be combined and structured expressively.
148. A special strength of the teaching is the way the teachers link the different elements of the subject so that the skills of composing, performing, listening and appraising are taught to sufficient depth. All of these positive teaching qualities were evident in a very good Year 6 lesson where pupils were composing music for a piece of film they watched about Africa. Pupils chose their percussion instruments and worked in groups to compose a piece of music, exploring their ideas. Pupils performed their compositions with enthusiasm and without inhibition and appraised the work of their peers. The teacher's own infectious enthusiasm for the subject instilled in pupils a deep love of the subject.
149. As a result of the systematic teaching of musical skills, Year 6 pupils sing with clear diction, pitch control and a sense of both phrase and musical expression. In class lessons and in large groupings such as choir practices and assemblies, the pupils sing songs in unison with a very good awareness of other performers. The quality of pupils' singing and the joy with which they perform songs add a very valuable dimension to the spiritual development of performers and audience alike. They are able to harmonise skilfully, and synchronise their voices to good effect to produce a very high standard of choral singing. The teacher gives due consideration to teaching the correct musical terms such as "tempo", "pitch", "dynamics", "structure", "timbre" and "texture". In this respect, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills.
150. The subject also makes very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they listen to, and orally evaluate, music from different eras and cultures. A special feature is how well pupils work together, as, for example, when a Year 5 class and Nursery quickly went into groups and using voices as well as tuned and untuned percussion instruments produced a high quality piece of music. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop music skills through use of ICT as when they compose and record music on keyboards, use a digital camera to record performances, use a computer to watch a video to compose music and make a CD for the anti-litter song performed for the Mayor of London. Links with

organisations such as The Unicorn Theatre and London Symphony Orchestra further develop pupils' learning.

151. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy music and get great pleasure from singing and playing together. The standard of behaviour and attitudes in lessons is always very good and all pupils have the opportunity to learn in a happy environment. The school ensures that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds play a full part in lessons. Extra-curricular activities, such as piano and keyboard playing extend pupils' learning in music. Regular opportunities for school performances allow pupils to celebrate their attainment in the subject with parents and friends of the school. In one lesson, the choir was being taught songs to sing in The Lion King performance to take place at the end of the summer term. There is a very good range of musical instruments and pupils treat these with respect. The use of funds to employ specialist teachers represents very good value for money and is highly valued by the school. Class teachers accompany pupils to lessons and they benefit greatly from observing and supporting the very high quality teaching of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. Standards achieved by pupils at the ages of seven and 11 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils progress well in most aspects of the physical education (PE) curriculum and, in some classes, performance in dance (Year 2) and netball (Year 5) are slightly higher than might be expected. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons, often with good support from adults, and learn well. Similarly, pupils whose home language is not English gain much from PE lessons as they express themselves through physical movement. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.
153. In Years 1 and 2, pupils show how they use movement imaginatively and respond to instructions from the teacher or a recorded dance programme. They can change pace and direction well, creating sequences which interpret the movements of different animals. In a Year 2 lesson, some pupils were able to use their bodies to make very good slithering movements across the floor, mimicking those of a snake. They were also able to predict how movements might change when an animal had eaten a lot of food and become heavier.
154. In Years 3 to 6, pupils were engaged in ball games, practising the skills required for netball. These include throwing the ball using different techniques, positioning to receive, catching and intercepting. In general, pupils are better at throwing than catching and teachers should consider focusing on this for further skill development. Pupils make good contributions to discussing the merits of various throwing styles and some have developed good skills.
155. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and other adults make good use of demonstration – by themselves and by pupils – and take every opportunity to develop pupils' language by ensuring they express themselves using appropriate terminology. Occasional use is made of a digital camera to capture pupils' movements and record their progress. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect. As a result, pupils enjoy their PE lessons and are keen to take part in all activities and to do their best.
156. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has produced a good scheme of work which covers the full range of activities. Although she has observed small parts of lessons taken by her colleagues, she has not yet been able to review how PE is being taught throughout the school. One of her planned tasks is to re-organise PE resources, particularly as the storage facilities are small for the good range of equipment available to the school. Outside space is at a premium because of the size of the playground and the recent installation of new fixed apparatus. Most PE activity takes place in the school halls which are well used.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Standards in religious education (RE) throughout the school are broadly at levels laid down in the local Agreed Syllabus. This represents satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Pupils' work on display and in books shows that they have a general understanding of religious diversity within the school community. Although only a small number of RE lessons were taught during the inspection, attainment seen was satisfactory and pupils made steady progress.
158. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of special features of major world faiths, including special books, places and stories. They have opportunities to learn at first hand about parts of a cathedral and benefit from visitors who come to talk about different faiths. In Years 3 to 6, these experiences continue as pupils explore aspects of major world faiths in greater depth and consider the significance of religious events such as festivals. Many pupils are able to interpret religious stories in a meaningful way and, in so doing, develop their own understanding.
159. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. RE is handled sensitively in a school where a number of faiths are represented and pupils' own knowledge is often used as a resource for learning. This happened very successfully in a Year 1 lesson in which Moslem pupils happily told others how prayer mats are used. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and use this to plan effectively for pupils' knowledge and skill development. Topics covered also contribute to their spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development, for example, the significance of religion in people's lives, the wonders of stories about Greek gods and the miracles performed by Jesus.

160. Resources are satisfactory and the subject is co-ordinated well. Some use of ICT is apparent from work on display. The Agreed Syllabus is followed at both key stages on the basis of a two-year cycle and pupils learn about, and from, religions in a variety of ways. The subject also links well with PSHCE where topics include moral dilemmas and pupils often bring their understanding of religious standpoints into such discussions.