

INSPECTION REPORT

CHILDS HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cricklewood

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101265

Headteacher: Mr M J Horton

Lead inspector: Mrs M Summers

Dates of inspection: 23-25 March 2004

Inspection number: 255782

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	333
School address:	Dersingham Road Cricklewood London
Postcode:	NW2 1SL
Telephone number:	020 8452 4531
Fax number:	020 8830 5902
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Gowers
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large school caters for 351 pupils between three and eleven years of age. Forty seven children attend the nursery part-time. The intake of the school has changed significantly over the past few years. The school roll is far less stable than it was at the last inspection. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than those of normal admission and transfer. Many of these are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Nearly half of the pupils speak English as an additional language with about fifteen per cent in the very early stages of learning English. Arabic and Somali are the most common languages spoken, other than English. Forty two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is much higher than in most schools. This number has risen considerably over recent years and reflects the changing nature of the school's population. Just under a third of the pupils come from white British families and the remainder represent a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds, the main groups being white European, Black African and other mixed Black backgrounds. Seventeen per cent come from refugee families and a very small number come from Traveller families.

There are far more pupils than average identified as having special educational needs or with statements of special educational need. This is because of the Pathways unit attached to the school, which caters for 12 pupils with specific language and communication problems. Some also have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of special needs pupils in the main school is about average. Most pupils start school at levels which are well below average for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25455	Mary Summers	Lead inspector	Music, Art and design.
9007	Rafi Salasnik	Lay inspector	
1395	Pauline Hoey	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, physical education, English as an additional language.
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education.
25787	Edmond Morris	Team Inspector	Mathematics, Special educational needs.
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

Childs Hill provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils and gives sound value for money. The nature of the school has changed significantly in recent years. More pupils from ethnic minority groups, many of whom are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, now attend. Many more start school at times other than the normal admission times. The headteacher and governors have begun to address these issues but there is still work to do. Recent initiatives are beginning to raise standards in English and mathematics. Current standards are average in mathematics in Year 6 but they are below average in English and well below average in science. Teaching is satisfactory. The school is managed appropriately and runs smoothly.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children get an excellent start to their education in the nursery where the teaching and organisation of the curriculum are of extremely high quality.
- Pupils in Pathways, the unit for pupils with significant special educational needs, are catered for very well and make considerable progress in all aspects of their development.
- The project to improve reading and writing standards in younger classes has been successful.
- A good range of visits, visiting speakers and extracurricular clubs make learning enjoyable.
- Good links exist with the local community, helping pupils to value different cultures and faiths.
- Standards in science are well below average in Year 6 and below average in information and communication technology. These subjects have not received enough attention in recent years.
- Poor attendance and punctuality cause disruption to pupils' learning.
- Systems to induct new pupils especially those with English as an additional language are weak.
- The school day is not organised well enough and leads to time being wasted.
- Teaching is not monitored rigorously enough to identify and address weaknesses.

There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection considering the changing nature of the school's intake. The school has begun to take action to address the dip in standards. This has been successful in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Most of the key issues for development identified in the last inspection report have been tackled. However, standards in information and communication technology and science are too low.

Standards achieved

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory**. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach nationally expected levels in mathematics. Standards in Year 2 are below average in mathematics, as they were in 2003. Standards in English are better than last year but still not up to those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. The good work done in Years 1 and 2 is improving achievement in reading and writing. In Years 2 and 6, standards in science and information and communication technology are too low. Standards in religious education are average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as do gifted and talented pupils. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Teachers try to meet their language needs in class but are hindered by the lack of good assessment systems to help them plan effectively. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well considering their starting points, which are well below the

levels expected for children when they start school. They reach the early learning goals in personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development but do not meet them in communication, language, literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Many pupils miss important parts of their education because of high absence levels and this means they do not achieve as well as they should. Many also arrive late to school, disrupting their own and others' education.

Quality of education

The school provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. Teaching is **satisfactory**. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Pathways where a wide range of experiences interest the pupils and stimulate their curiosity. Pupils with special needs are well taught. Reading and writing are very well taught in Years 1 and 2 and reflect the very good management of the recent literacy project undertaken to raise standards. Teachers and assistants have been well trained to deliver these lessons and pupils are doing better as a result. Teaching in other lessons is satisfactory. Lessons start briskly with useful introductions but in some cases, teachers talk for too long, leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete their work. Sometimes teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. In these cases, pupils do only enough to get by.

The organisation of the curriculum ensures that all groups of pupils are included. Pupils receive sound levels of care and support and their progress in English and mathematics is tracked successfully. Gifted and talented pupils are provided for well through a range of interesting clubs covering subjects like mathematics and art. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a rich and stimulating range of experiences which gives them a really good start and results in very positive attitudes to learning. The school day is not organised well enough to make best use of the time available. Some lessons are too short, making it difficult for pupils to learn effectively. Not enough time is spent on information and communication technology. This means that pupils are not reaching high enough standards in the subject. Induction procedures are excellent for nursery pupils but unsatisfactory for pupils who start in older classes.

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The school's work is directed appropriately by the headteacher. Some staff in managerial positions are doing a very good job and their work is really helping to raise standards, for example in mathematics. Other senior staff do not have enough impact on what is going on in classrooms. Governors monitor the school's work and support it well. Some useful work has been done to monitor performance and, in the case of the recent literacy initiative, has resulted in a well organised and managed project which has improved teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Teaching is monitored regularly but not rigorously enough to identify weaknesses and bring about rapid improvement.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Parents' views vary widely. Some are very supportive and others have more negative views. This reflects the fact that the school is not yet communicating well enough with all parents. Parents really appreciate the excellent introduction to school life provided by the nursery and give the staff their full support. Pupils also hold diverse views. Some are very pleased to be at the school, while others feel their views are not taken into account or acted upon.

Improvements needed

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

- Raise standards in science and information and communication technology.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Improve systems to induct new pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language.
- Ensure that time throughout the school day is used more effectively.
- Monitor teaching more rigorously to identify weaknesses and help teachers address these.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards observed in the inspection are below average in English, average in mathematics and well below average in science in Year 6. Taking all the circumstances of the pupils into account their achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the main school with special educational needs achieve well. Those in Pathways achieve very well.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well, especially those in the nursery.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are doing well in reading and writing but are not yet at levels expected for pupils of their age in these subjects.
- Pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach average standards in mathematics this year.
- Gifted and talented pupils achieve well because of the good provision made for them in subjects like mathematics, art, music and French.
- Science standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Years 2 and 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.9 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.9 (14.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (24.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.2 (24.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. Many children face significant barriers to their learning when they first start school. A high number of pupils start at different times of the year, many of whom are in the early stages of learning English. Taking these factors into account, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in national tests have dipped in recent years reflecting the different circumstances of the pupils now attending the school. The leadership is taking determined action to stop the decline. Improvements in provision in mathematics and English during the current academic year are successfully beginning to raise standards.

2. Analysis of national test results and records of pupils' progress identified those who were underachieving in mathematics. As a result, additional teaching support has been put into Year 3, to

try to address girls' underachievement in last year's national tests. Similarly a club is now running to meet the needs of those pupils who show a particular gift for mathematics. More pupils in Year 6 are likely to reach the higher Level 5 in the tests this year. Standards are being raised successfully as a result of these improvements.

3. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now achieving much better in reading and writing. Standards are not up to those expected nationally in Year 2 but all groups of pupils are now making good progress. They are developing secure phonic skills and are beginning to transfer these to their written work. The project started in October 2003 has been very successful. This is because it has been well led and managed. Parents have been involved and have supported their children at home. The quality of teaching of literacy has been successfully improved in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress has been carefully monitored and changes have been made to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language benefit greatly from these small group sessions, which cater very well for their needs.

4. Pupils' achievement in English in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Standards in English remain below average in Year 6. Throughout the school pupils skills in speaking and listening are below average. Many lack confidence in speaking in front of an audience. Spelling and handwriting are also weak.

5. Standards in science are well below average throughout the school. The subject has not received enough focus in recent years to ensure that all aspects are covered and that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developing as they move through the school.

6. Standards in information and communication technology are below average. This was an issue at the last inspection. Provision has improved, with a new computer suite and computers in classrooms but these are not being used well enough to ensure pupils make good progress. Lessons in the suite are often too short and do not give pupils enough time to practise and refine their developing skills and knowledge. Computers in classes are seldom used to provide additional opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. Weaknesses in the subject reflect the lack of effective leadership and management. Since the previous co-ordinator left, there has been no clear guidance for teachers to support their planning and delivery of the subject.

7. The high number of pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they move through the school. This is because they are usually well supported in lessons by skilled teaching assistants. Work in most lessons is at a suitable level so that pupils are able to build on their successes and learn new skills and knowledge effectively. Pupils from Pathways achieve very well as they are very well taught and always given very good support in the lessons they attend in the main school. Individual education plans are relevant and the targets are clear.

8. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve very well because of the very good quality teaching they receive and the well organised curriculum. By the time they leave Reception classes, most reach the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative and physical development. Although their achievement is very good, they are still below levels expected for their age in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy a rich range of very worthwhile experiences but have not yet had time to make up for the low levels at which they start school.

9. The school has done some good work in providing for gifted and talented pupils. These pupils are achieving well, particularly in subjects such as mathematics, art, music and French. Teachers have identified these pupils accurately and a good range of clubs has been provided to meet their needs. In class lessons, however, the work for these pupils is not always sufficiently challenging to ensure they achieve highly enough especially in English, science and information and communication technology.

10. Many more pupils with English as an additional language now attend the school than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are trying to provide for their language needs by providing lots of opportunities for talk and discussion. They are hindered however by the lack of clear information about pupils' different levels of language acquisition. Classroom teachers have not had enough training to be able to use a wide range of strategies to promote these pupils' language development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of those pupils who attend school regularly are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Pathways with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed very well.
- Pupils respect one another's cultural backgrounds and faiths.
- Children in the nursery have very positive attitudes to school.
- Attendance rates are well below the national average. Many pupils miss important parts of their education and this affects their achievement.
- Many pupils arrive late in the mornings, disrupting their own and others' education.

Commentary

11. Children in the nursery really enjoy school. They and their parents are keen to take part in the exciting range of activities which the nursery staff prepare each morning. They are excited about their learning and show care and concern for one another. Their behaviour is very good. They are confident in speaking to adults even if their articulation is sometimes poor.

12. In older classes pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships vary considerably. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and take a lively interest in their work. They behave well and work hard. Most are ready to help one another. A minority of pupils however, often boys, show unruly behaviour. This is often linked to the lack of clear expectations by teachers of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. This has not been identified and addressed quickly enough through the school's monitoring procedures.

13. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory during lunchtime. Pupils collect their lunches sensibly and with a minimum of fuss. The state of the hall after lunch however, is unacceptable. Food and waste paper are dropped on the floor with no consideration for other pupils or for the staff who have to clear it up. Pupils behave well in the playground. They play together well showing no signs of racism or bullying. There were four exclusions last year but there have been none during the current academic year. There are clear sanctions for unacceptable behaviour but some of these are not as effective as others.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	76	1	0
White – any other White background	25	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0

Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	23	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	10	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	13	1	0
Black or Black British – African	28	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	26	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	0	0

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

14. Pupils are given some opportunities to take responsibility. They help in class by giving out books and equipment and older pupils are encouraged to support younger pupils in the playground.

15. Sound social, moral and spiritual development enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong, develop their own views and beliefs and value and respect each other. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example in religious education and assemblies, as well as through visitors to the school. They understand the importance of festivals and traditions from different cultures and the symbols of different religions and faiths.

16. Pupils in Pathways who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are very well managed in class and around the school. This enables them to be fully included in school life and join pupils in the main school for some lessons, assemblies, concerts and special events.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	4.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

17. Attendance has been low for several years. This year's figures show some improvement but attendance still remains well below the national average. Many pupils miss important parts of their education which affects their progress and the final standards that they reach.

18. Punctuality is poor with a significant number of pupils arriving late each morning. This disrupts lessons and affects their own learning and that of their fellow pupils. There has been little improvement in this since the last inspection. The school is not communicating effectively with all parents to ensure they understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a sound quality of education for its pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. Provision in older classes is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory. It is very good overall in the Foundation Stage and means that children achieve very well in these classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils in Pathways receive very good teaching and achieve very well.
- The teaching of literacy is very good in younger classes.
- Mathematics is well taught.
- Teachers recap on previous learning to help pupils remember what they have learned.
- Expectations of pupils are often too low in Years 3 to 6.
- Marking is weak. Pupils are not clear about what they have to do to improve.
- The teaching parts of lessons are sometimes too long and leave insufficient time for pupils to carry out independent or group work.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology in lessons.
- Teachers do not always cater well enough for pupils with English as an additional language.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
4 (6%)	9 (15%)	18 (29%)	29 (48%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and ensures that pupils' achievement is appropriate as they move through the school. Children get an excellent start to their education in the nursery where highly skilled teaching means that they make extremely rapid progress from the low levels at which they start. In Reception classes, teaching and learning are good although there are inconsistencies between the two classes which have not been picked up and addressed through the school's monitoring systems. Progress throughout the Foundation Stage is carefully tracked and this helps teachers provide for the next steps in pupils' development.

20. All the excellent teaching was seen in the nursery. As a result, children are doing very well during their early days at school. Most of the very good teaching was seen in Pathways and in literacy lessons in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This means that pupils in Pathways achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. The recent project to improve levels of literacy has been very effective and has had a considerable impact on teaching and learning in the subject. Teaching is carefully structured and matched very well to pupils' individual needs. The pace of lessons is very good and a great deal is covered in a short space of time with very good reinforcement of new skills and knowledge. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the project. They are well trained and able to present short literacy lessons very well, even where groups contain pupils with significant language and communication problems. Pupils in these lessons are achieving very well as a result of this very effective teaching.

21. Computers are used very well in the nursery to stimulate the children and teach them basic skills. In Years 1 to 6 opportunities are missed to develop these skills further. Teachers seldom plan the use of computers in lessons to allow pupils to present their work in different ways or give them the chance to practise mathematical or literacy skills.

22. Pupils in Pathways receive very good teaching. All their work is meticulously planned to help them build effectively upon their existing skills, knowledge and understanding and to give them a wide variety of stimulating and interesting activities and experiences. In one lesson about the police in the community, the use of walkie-talkies made a dramatic improvement to the pupils' communication skills as they were concentrating intently on using the equipment correctly. Pupils also attend lessons with the mainstream pupils. In these, they receive very good quality support from teachers and assistants, enabling them to achieve very well according to their abilities. Other pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in class, with teachers providing work at appropriate levels and assistants giving the right degree of support.

23. Teachers usually start their lessons by recapping on previous work. Question and answer sessions help the pupils remember what was covered and opportunities are sometimes provided for pupils to talk about this with one another. These sessions also enable teachers to assess what the pupils have remembered so they know which pupils require further support and which are ready to move forward. In some lessons, the main teaching section goes on far too long however, and leaves insufficient time for the pupils to complete their work. This is noted in the small amount of work contained in pupils' work books particularly in science, history, geography and religious education. The problem is exacerbated by teachers' expectations in some lessons, which are too low, especially in Years 3 to 6. Some teachers are too easily satisfied with short, poorly presented pieces of work.

24. Literacy is taught satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 encourage pupils to use imaginative vocabulary in their writing but this is not always the case in Years 3 and 4. Some teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work but this practice is not consistent across the school. This reflects the weaknesses in the school's monitoring systems.

25. Mathematics is well taught and this has meant that standards have risen since last year. Lessons are well planned for different groups of pupils and this ensures they make good progress as they move through the school. Assessment information has been used well to identify underachievement and further support or extension work has been provided to maximise pupils' learning.

26. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly but they seldom provide any useful comments to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils are not aware of the levels at which they are operating or what they have to do to reach the next stage. Opportunities are missed to involve them more directly in assessing their own work and providing the information to motivate and stimulate them to do even better.

27. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory teaching. Some teachers use good strategies to help these pupils develop their language skills but this practice is inconsistent across the school. Teaching is particularly effective where visual images, tactile resources and strategies such as modelling are used to extend pupils' linguistic experiences. These techniques are used to excellent effect in the nursery. However, the lack of careful assessment of these pupils' needs means that teachers do not really know their pupils' precise stages of language development. Some teachers do not have enough knowledge of how to provide for these pupils.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and very good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is enriched by a good level of additional activities. The accommodation is adequate and the resources sufficient to deliver the full curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A rich and exciting range of experiences is planned for children in Foundation stage.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- All pupils have complete access to the curriculum and are fully included in all aspects.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in interesting activities both in and out of school.
- The use of time within the school day is not always effective.

Commentary

28. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory improvement in the curriculum. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and ensure that pupils build on their prior knowledge and understanding in lessons. However, information and communication technology is still not supporting learning well enough in other subjects. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection.

29. The curriculum for children in the nursery and Reception classes is very good. Children are well prepared for moving on to Year 1. The range of experiences offered in the nursery is excellent and really stimulates the children to want to come to school. All areas of children's development are planned for carefully and time is used very well. Children in Reception classes are also catered for well although there are some inconsistencies between classes which have not been identified and addressed through the school's monitoring systems.

30. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and, where possible, is linked to the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils are given full access to the curriculum and receive good quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. The pupils in Pathways also have access to a good quality curriculum that is further enhanced by teachers' imaginative planning of interesting activities. For instance, they all go on an annual residential visit that helps them to improve their social skills and fosters independence, as well as being a great deal of fun.

31. There is a good level of inclusion at Childs Hill. There is good support for pupils of all abilities including those who are more able. For example, they are given opportunities to learn at a higher level through after school clubs in mathematics. Working in small groups in English and mathematics also caters for pupils who need extra support to help them raise the standard of their work. The new scheme for improving literacy in Years 1 and 2 is also being used effectively by including lower ability pupils from Years 3 and 4 in the sessions to raise their standards of work. These pupils thoroughly enjoy the lessons, participating enthusiastically and achieving very well. Pupils from Pathways join main school classes for some lessons and, with good support, learn new skills and knowledge whilst interacting with other children. They also attend some assemblies, have joint playtimes and are always included in any special events or concerts.

32. The school plans a range of useful learning opportunities, some outside the school day. These include chess, music, choir, mathematics, drama and art clubs. Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest such as museums make the curriculum more interesting. Participation in the arts is good with the school taking part in local music festivals, working with visiting artists and producing their own recitals and exhibitions for parents to enjoy. There are residential visits for pupils that enable them to learn new skills such as orienteering as well as learning to live together harmoniously in an environment away from home. These experiences are not just limited to the older pupils as those in Year 2 have a 'sleepover' in school each year.

33. The school day is not well organised. Time is not used to the best advantage. Lessons are sometimes too short, for example in information and communication technology and religious education. Teaching is rushed and pupils do not have enough time to complete their work to a good standard. Different playtimes mean that lessons in some classes are disrupted by noise whilst other classes are playing outside. Different lunchtimes mean that pupils doing physical education or

music in the hall are disrupted by pupils returning to their classes. Afternoon playtime results in a very short session at the end of the day, which is seldom used well enough for pupils to engage in any purposeful activity.

34. The accommodation is well kept and maintained and is further enhanced by some attractive displays that show the value the school puts on the work of its pupils. The art club, in particular and the Pathways pupils have mounted some vibrant and exciting displays of work. The library has been much improved recently although is not yet in full use. New play areas for the nursery and Reception children are providing very good opportunities for them to improve their physical, personal and social development. New meeting rooms for parents have recently been provided to try to encourage more parents into school.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent induction arrangements for children who start in the nursery but the induction of pupils who begin at other times of the year is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs are cared for effectively. The level of care in Pathways is excellent.
- Pupils are not consulted enough about the running of their school.

Commentary

35. Induction arrangements for pupils joining nursery are excellent. Home visits are made so that adults know the children before they start school. This is invaluable in establishing productive relationships with parents although this is not built upon effectively as children become older. Arrangements for pupils joining during the year and to older classes are not as effective. Pupils' language needs are not assessed carefully enough and insufficient support is given during their early days at school. This often results in poor attendance. Communication with the parents of these pupils is not as effective as it should be.

36. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory and ensure that pupils work in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes and when moving around the school. The food and waste paper left on the hall floor after lunch, however constitutes a health hazard. Child protection procedures are secure. Adults know the medical conditions and appropriate treatment for the children in their care. This means that parents are confident that their children will be looked after and supported appropriately.

37. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school life and are carefully tracked to monitor their achievement. Their individual education plans are reviewed regularly. The pupils with statements of special educational need in the main school and those in Pathways receive their full entitlement as outlined in their individual statements. Pupils in Pathways are monitored extremely well and this has a very positive impact on their learning. Every achievement, however small, is noted and acted upon by adjusting the planning of future work accordingly. This enables all the pupils to make very good progress towards attaining their individual targets.

38. Pupils' progress is tracked in English and mathematics and this information is now being used effectively to identify those who are not doing well enough. Some useful intervention strategies have been introduced to help these pupils catch up. Target setting procedures are in place for pupils with special educational needs, so that they and their parents know the next steps in their learning. Targets for other pupils either as year groups, classes, small groups or individuals are not clearly identified. They have little idea about what they have to do to improve. Systems to monitor pupils

with English as an additional language are weak. Their needs are not clearly identified nor is their development tracked well enough to identify next steps in their language development.

39. The school has not carried out any comprehensive consultation of pupils. There is a school council which meets each week for fifteen minutes but this is not enough time for pupils to have a real say in the running of their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and also with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information to parents about their children's progress.
- Nursery staff involve parents well in their children's education.
- There are good links with surrounding faith communities and local residents.
- Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed. In Pathways, the links with parents and carers are excellent.

Commentary

40. Links with some parents are very effective and lead to them supporting the school and their children very well. Parents help out with school trips and some are involved in running after school clubs which benefit the pupils considerably. There is a very active Parents' Association which raises a large amount of money which is used to improve learning resources as well as the school environment.

41. In other cases, links with parents are less effective. Few parents of ethnic minority pupils are actively involved in school life or in their children's education. This is because the school is not yet active enough in developing relationships with them and enlisting their support. The high rate of absences and the poor punctuality of many pupils is a direct result of this. Opportunities are missed to build on the excellent relationships developed in the nursery as pupils move into older classes. In addition, unsatisfactory induction procedures for new pupils, particularly those with English is an additional language, prevent effective links from being established.

42. Annual reports provide very good information to parents about the progress of their children. This helps them know how they can support their children at home.

43. Parents and carers of pupils in the main school with special educational needs are kept fully informed about how their children are progressing. Parents and carers of pupils in Pathways receive very useful information. For example, there is a contact book to keep them fully informed about the curriculum and their child's progress. They are welcome to visit at any time and some show great support for the school, for example by helping to paint the entrance to the building.

44. The school has good links with the local community, for example visiting senior citizens homes and participating enthusiastically with other schools in joint events such as the borough music festival. There are also close links with faith communities which result in useful visits to a wide variety of local places of worship. Pupils learn to respect these different faiths. There are good links with the secondary schools to which Year 6 pupils transfer. These help pupils make the transition with confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is good. The school is led competently by the headteacher and senior staff. Management systems are satisfactory although there is room for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of Pathways is very good.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- The governing body provides good support to the school and monitors its work effectively.
- Teaching and learning are not monitored rigorously enough to identify and address weaknesses quickly.
- Some key members of staff have unequal workloads and this limits their effectiveness.
- Good work has begun in analysing data to identify areas of underachievement.

Commentary

45. The headteacher guides the school's work appropriately. He shows great commitment to the school and has been successful in encouraging staff to lead various aspects of development. He supports staff and pupils well and has ensured that the school has maintained a calm and positive ethos despite the great changes that have occurred over recent years. He has a strong focus on maintaining good levels of behaviour throughout the school, to ensure that lessons proceed calmly and without interruption. This is done in a very sensitive and supportive manner which results in pupils having high levels of respect for him.

46. Governance is good. Governors are interested, supportive of the school and are well informed about its work. The information they receive from the headteacher and individual co-ordinators enables them to gain a clear overview of what the school is providing for the children. Some individual governors show extremely high levels of commitment to the school and work tirelessly to maintain the premises, raise funds and support the pupils.

47. Financial procedures are satisfactory. Spending is monitored regularly by staff and governors, who take a keen interest in ensuring that they get appropriate value for their money. This is especially the case when new developments are considered for the site.

48. Pathways is led and managed very well. All members of the team are very aware of their roles and responsibilities and work tirelessly to help the pupils make very good progress. Provision is regularly reviewed to make improvements so that pupil achieve as well as they can.

49. Foundation Stage is also very well led and managed. A high level of professional expertise means that nursery staff are trained and directed very carefully and provide excellent provision for the children in their care. The nature of the school's accommodation means that the nursery is separate from the Reception classes. This presents challenges for the co-ordinator in monitoring provision. Teachers' plans are monitored carefully to check that the children in the two Reception classes receive similar experiences. However, some inconsistencies between the two classes in the quality of teaching have not been picked up and addressed quickly enough.

50. A further example of good leadership and management is in the recent project to improve literacy in Years 1 and 2. This project has been based on good analysis of data, careful action planning, good staff training to ensure high quality delivery and rigorous monitoring to ensure weaknesses are addressed. In many other cases, action planning for improvement is weak and not based on easily measured success criteria. They do not drive improvement on fast enough.

51. Although senior staff, mainly the headteacher, carry out regular lesson observations, these are not rigorous enough to ensure that weaknesses in teaching are identified and addressed. Many

co-ordinators have not been given enough time to carry out lesson observations and this has hindered their effectiveness. They have been unable to identify where practice needs to improve. The lack of effective leadership and management in information and communication technology has severely affected the development of the subject. Workloads of some senior staff are very uneven. Some have a great deal of responsibility in addition to teaching full-time. One senior teacher, in addition to a full-time teaching commitment in Year 6 for example, also takes the major role in the co-ordination of provision for special educational needs, as well as leading development of provision for gifted and talented pupils. Others have a much lighter load and have little direct impact on teaching and learning.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March2003]

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,236,808	Balance from previous year	126,527
Total expenditure	1,221,182	Balance carried forward to the next	142,153
Expenditure per pupil	3,155		

52. Finances are monitored appropriately by the headteacher, finance manager and the governing body. The balance of funds carried forward into the current financial year was used to fund premises developments including the new library and meeting rooms. The impact of these improvements has yet to be seen.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision in the nursery is outstanding and children receive a really good start to their education.
- There is a very good team spirit amongst the staff in the Foundation Stage despite the limitations of the building.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- The induction programme in the nursery builds important bridges between home and school.

Commentary

53. The school has improved its provision for the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are very well planned and take full account of all children's needs. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment but overall, they are well below the levels expected for their age. Achievement is very good in the nursery and good in Reception. Children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well. There is a good range of resources and teachers provide very good opportunities to develop children's learning in all areas.

54. In the nursery, the curriculum and range of activities are excellent. Provision in Reception classes is good but sometimes not as vibrant and exciting as in the nursery. There are some inconsistencies in the teaching between the two Reception classes which have not been picked up and addressed by the school's monitoring procedures. Nursery nurses make a very good contribution to children's learning. They are very well directed and have good levels of knowledge themselves about how young children learn. This enables them to provide excellent role models for children and engage purposefully with them to help them learn. There is a good team spirit between the staff who share common goals and purposes. This ensures a consistent approach enabling all children to make equal progress.

55. Assessment procedures are very good and provide useful information which adults use to plan suitable activities for different children. Careful records are kept of individual progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The calm encouragement given by the staff enables children to explore new ideas and activities with confidence.
- Adults provide many opportunities to help the children work and play harmoniously.
- Children's attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good.

Commentary

56. The programme for personal, social, and emotional development is a strength of the provision and underpins all aspects of teaching and learning. As a result, children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. The excellent relationships formed by staff with children provide security and comfort, and children develop a sense of trust and very good attitudes to school. Parents appreciate the excellent introduction to school life provided by the nursery and give the staff their full support. Children are encouraged to try out new activities and these are structured, so that children develop an awareness of their own needs and feelings. With support, they begin to be sensitive to those of others. Through skilful adult intervention, children gradually develop the confidence to participate, to share and to take turns.

57. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are vigilant about children who lack a positive self-image and develop their confidence sensitively. With support, children learn to be independent and manage tasks appropriate for their learning needs. Through consistent encouragement and praise, children who have little understanding of English begin to take the initiative in a range of activities such as role-play. The nursery staff successfully teach children how to take care of themselves. All staff have high expectations about the way children behave and are consistent in their approach. Children respond accordingly. Staff help children to make choices and give them scope to follow their activities through.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well by the end of Reception but the majority are unlikely to meet the expected standards because they have not had enough time to overcome the significant barriers to learning which they face.
- Speaking skills are fostered well but children's development of language is slow.
- Staff make use of every opportunity to develop communication skills.

Commentary

58. Because of the low starting point for many children, a significant number do not reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

59. The development of children's language skills has high priority and the provision of wide-ranging experiences stimulates their curiosity and encourages them to talk about what they are doing. Speaking and listening skills are well taught and fostered at all times. Children with English as an additional language are encouraged sensitively to learn English vocabulary and gain confidence by speaking new words with high levels of support.

60. Teachers select resources to stimulate and develop children's language. The effective use of visual aids and the thoughtful choice of books with colourful illustrations help children grow in confidence as they extend their vocabularies. In one Reception class, children were able to quote every word accurately from a story book being used as part of their project on animals. The teacher had generated a love of books and children showed their enthusiasm as they browsed and shared books with others.

61. Writing materials are freely available and children are encouraged to write for different purposes. For example, in the 'travel agents' children experienced the satisfaction of using writing to draw a response from others as they made holiday bookings. Younger children make marks and enjoy experimenting with lines and symbols. Older children write the letter shapes they see in their name and higher achieving children can write their names and some key words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of children's counting and number recognition is good.
- Children show a curiosity about numbers and patterns.
- The teaching strategies used and the differentiated activities devised to reinforce learning, are laying a good foundation for the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy.

Commentary

62. Children's mathematical skills are well below average when they enter the nursery. By the end of Reception, children are in line to meet the early learning goals in some areas of practical mathematics, such as sorting and counting. However, in areas requiring mathematical language, verbal reasoning and recording, they are unlikely to meet the levels expected for their age. This is because many children speak English as an additional language and do not have sufficient vocabulary to fully understand the concepts. In the nursery, children begin to develop their knowledge of numbers as they count and sort with a wide range of objects. They begin to understand the order and position of numbers to ten in a sequence.

63. This good start is built on in the Reception classes. Children learn about the consistency of number and work more confidently with numbers to ten. They can write the numbers and draw the matching quantity of objects. They recognise two-dimensional shapes. This good achievement in mathematical development is the result of the good quality teaching they receive.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of materials with which children can build, design and construct.
- Children's natural curiosity is fostered appropriately by interesting topics that are relevant to their age and experience.

Commentary

64. Although there is a good range of interesting and stimulating experiences planned for them, the majority of children will not meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

65. Teachers provide a rich range of opportunities to explore the environment. They reinforce children's growing awareness and curiosity about a range of objects and events. They encourage children to explore features of the wider world. In the nursery for example, children were finding out about train and air travel through role-play. Adults supported children well by asking questions which encouraged them to think carefully and respond at length.

66. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop skills of prediction and scientific enquiry as they experiment with sand and water. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning. Teachers provide opportunities for key words to be taught and specific skills to be practised. In a Reception class, as children were playing with zoo animals, the teacher helped them to understand the habitats of certain zoo animals and the reasons for the way they are housed.

67. In the Foundation Stage, children show a keen interest in using information and communication technology. In the nursery, children use a robot to learn about direction and location.

They are developing control skills and an understanding of how information technology can be used to plan journeys. In Reception, children are developing sound keyboard skills and know how to use a mouse to move items around the screen or to give the computer instructions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage acquire a high level dexterity from using a range of small pieces of equipment.
- The outside area provides a good resource for children to develop their control of physical movement.
- The recent development of the larger outdoor play area has enriched reception children's experiences.

Commentary

68. By the end of Reception, children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning. They are confident, well co-ordinated and agile. Nursery children enthusiastically explore the open spaces and try out different ways of using the interesting resources. They ride tricycles with a high degree of expertise. There are planned opportunities for children to explore the rich outdoor play curriculum that reflects the indoor provision. Children learn effectively as they work on a larger, more active scale than is possible in the classroom. They enjoy the outdoor provision where there is always a sense of fun. Parents arriving early to collect their children from the nursery love to watch the children at play. As parents leave, they often stop to examine some aspects of the provision and talk to their children about what they did there. This provides an excellent example of how the nursery staff are involving parents in their children's learning.

69. Both indoors and outdoors, teachers provide a wide range of everyday tools and equipment so that children can use their imagination and develop sound physical control and dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Many opportunities are provided for children to use their initiative.
- Resources are used effectively.
- Adults make a valuable contribution to children's learning as they sensitively engage in the activities.

Commentary

70. Teachers provide very good opportunities for children to explore colour, texture and shape in a range of activities. Children's achievement is good and most will meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Staff give children the scope to select materials for themselves and the time for them to experiment. They intervene only at appropriate times to teach specific skills.

71. The imaginative role-play areas and the way that adults interact within these are real strengths of the provision. The staff inspire children to act out familiar experiences, use their imaginations and learn about life beyond their personal world. For example, in a Reception class a well-resourced 'vets' surgery' provided an environment where children could model the roles of a vet,

a nurse and a receptionist. The children used face masks when they 'injected' animals and cared for their injuries. The nursery nurse played a key role as she introduced specific vocabulary and taught children how to use it.

Example of outstanding practice

Role play in the nursery

An aeroplane was waiting as children arrived in the nursery one morning. Immediately, their interest was captured. The excitement was electric as they climbed aboard for a flight to a park in America. The pilot and co-pilot busily checked the controls ready for takeoff. The 'passengers' fastened their seat belts securely and an adult flight attendant served drinks. Parents joined in the excitement and some helped to settle the 'passengers' in the cabin that was constructed from large building blocks. Other parents helped their children to write luggage labels. Unfortunately, the crew found a fault on the aeroplane but quickly a team of expert engineers arrived with plastic hammers and saws to sort out the problem. They worked energetically and soon the plane was in good order. The flight time was said to be about ten minutes so some 'passengers' planned to have a cheese burger on arrival in America rather than a meal on the flight.

This excellent provision reflects the skilful approach of the nursery staff to role-play and the importance they place on high quality resources to develop children's language skills. The excellent teaching in the scenario extended children's learning tremendously and introduced new vocabulary within a relevant context.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well because of the systematic teaching of phonics.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 try hard to use imaginative vocabulary when they write.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The phonics programme is very well managed.
- Assessment information is not used to set individual targets to enhance the rate of pupils' achievements.

Commentary

72. Standards are below average in all aspects of English in Years 2 and 6. Results in the national curriculum tests last year were well below the national average for Year 6 and Year 2 pupils, but matched those found achieved in similar schools. The standards in the current Year 6 are higher than last year because more pupils are on track to achieve at the higher Level 5.

73. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are rising quickly. In October 2003, the school introduced a phonically based literacy programme to tackle low standards in literacy at this stage. There is clear evidence of improvement in both reading and writing. Pupils work in groups organised according to attainment, and some pupils in Years 3 and 4 are also included in this intensive programme. Work is matched very accurately to pupils' needs, and they respond very well to the brisk pace and variety of activities within each session. Achievement is good. Most pupils are proud of their learning. They apply their phonic skills to read new and unfamiliar words and make logical attempts when they are spelling. Comprehension and handwriting skills are developing well alongside the phonic skills. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the success of this programme. All staff are well prepared and are committed to the programme. They manage groups very well, using praise and encouragement to keep pupils focused.

74. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in all year groups. Teachers do provide opportunities for paired discussions in many lessons, but most pupils are less confident in speaking in front of an audience. During lessons, teachers frequently question pupils, but too often they expect or accept brief answers. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to make extended replies, and are often not challenged to explain their thinking. Many pupils are not developing good habits of listening when others are speaking. Noise from playtimes is a distracting feature in many classrooms. Some teachers also do not insist on quiet within the room when summarising lessons and some pupils continue to write or fiddle with equipment. This means they are not concentrating effectively and miss this important part of the lesson.

75. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, resulting in satisfactory achievement. All lessons start with a clear recap of previous work, which helps to make learning coherent for pupils and reminds them of relevant vocabulary. Many pupils have a limited range of vocabulary. However, teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to use more imaginative words in their writing, and some become quite adventurous. In lessons in Years 5 and 6 for example, pupils worked hard to write and improve sentences about a tiger, choosing words very carefully for effect.

76. Standards of handwriting and presentation are below average. Pupils are taught to check their spelling and punctuation, but they are often careless and even copy words incorrectly. There is no established policy for teaching handwriting, and few pupils develop neat joined writing by Year 6. This limits the levels that pupils can reach in the national tests. Many pupils still print, and some position their letters incorrectly in relation to the line. The quality of teachers' marking is weak. In some cases it is too positive and does not provide any guidance to pupils on how to improve.

77. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support during lessons and achieve well. Work is adapted to cater for their needs and learning support staff ensure that the pupils stay on task. Teaching in Pathways is very good. Teachers make work interesting and staff encourage pupils to try their best. Pupils' books show very good progress in writing.

78. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily but could do even better if their needs were provided for more consistently throughout the school. Many teachers lack enough knowledge of pupils' language needs and how to provide for them effectively in lessons. They are also hindered by weak assessment systems which fail to assess these pupils' needs effectively.

79. Leadership and management of English are satisfactory. Although the school has identified the need to establish a systematic programme of monitoring, this has yet to be fully implemented. As a result, the quality of provision varies considerably from class to class. The school gathers much assessment data, and individual progress is carefully tracked. This information is not used to set individual targets, however, so that many pupils are not clear about how to improve their work. Management of the phonics programme is very good. Enthusiastic leadership, rigorous monitoring and good staff training are beginning to raise standards. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, bearing in mind the changing nature of the school's intake.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

80. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not record enough of their work in subjects such as history, geography or religious education. They therefore get little practice in developing and applying skills learned in English lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and are similar to those found nationally.
- Good use is made of assessment data to identify where achievement could be better.
- Teachers plan together effectively.
- The management of mathematics is good.
- Marking of pupils' work gives little guidance for future improvement.

Commentary

81. The standards attained in the 2003 tests taken by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were well below the national average although in line with standards found in similar schools. Pupils currently in Year 2 are working at levels below those found nationally and those in Year 6 are attaining standards the same as those expected nationally. This is a good improvement since last year and is due mainly to a number of effective initiatives designed to raise standards. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection but this is mainly a reflection of the changing nature of the school's intake rather than a deterioration in the provision. There has also been a considerable improvement in practical and investigational work. Pupils are regularly set interesting problems to solve and enjoy a measure of independence in their learning.

82. Pupils develop their mathematical skills and knowledge well as they move through the school. This is predominantly a result of the careful planning of suitable work. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. There was a concern about the underachievement of Year 2 girls in mathematics last year but with appropriate intervention this is being resolved. They are already catching up with the boys in the standards they attain. Pupils with a particular aptitude for mathematics are also making good progress through the two after school clubs that give them challenging problems to investigate and solve. There is also extra support for pupils in Year 6 who are struggling to reach the national standard. This is provided after school and is proving effective in improving their learning and raising standards.

83. There are useful assessment procedures in place that are used successfully to help pupils reach their full potential. The data tracks how individual pupils or particular groups are progressing and triggers action if they are not performing well enough. This might consist of additional help in a small group or more specific help within a lesson. Test papers are analysed to identify areas of strength or concern. Planning of work is then adjusted to address any perceived problems.

84. The subject is led and managed well. The focus is clearly on raising standards. A good number of initiatives have been put in place to support this aim. Provision is monitored adequately by checking pupils' books, teachers' planning and by observing some lessons.

85. Pupils' work is marked regularly with some encouraging and supportive comments added. However, it does not help pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve further. Pupils' work is often presented untidily and this makes for mistakes and inaccuracies in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

86. The pupils' skills in mathematics are sometimes used in other subjects of the curriculum but their inclusion is not always planned. When such links are made they prove useful, making learning more relevant and helping pupils reinforce their skills and understanding in mathematics. For example, pupils use force meters and record their findings in science and draw line graphs to show rainfall in their geography work. The greater use of information and communication technology in mathematics is an area appropriately identified by the school for future development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Some useful work has been done this year in analysing pupils' performance and this has led to some improvements in provision. These have not yet impacted on standards.
- Although leadership and management are satisfactory, the lack of a regular and rigorous monitoring programme means that weaknesses in teaching and learning are not identified quickly enough.

Commentary

87. The standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are well below the national average. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

88. Analysis of pupils' performance in the national tests 2003 showed the areas in which pupils were weakest. This information has been used to help plan a better programme of work for Year 6 pupils to help them approach the tests with more confidence and expertise. Despite this, pupils are unlikely to reach standards expected nationally. This is because in past years the subject has taken

a low priority as the school has concentrated on literacy and numeracy. Year 6 pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding which cannot be filled in one year.

89. Year 6 pupils can predict, hypothesise and record the results of experiments fairly well but their knowledge and use of vocabulary is limited to basic terms. This restricts their ability to reach higher levels in science because they have difficulty in expressing their ideas and raising questions effectively. This in turn impacts on their written work which is often too short and lacks clear explanation. Although some links are made with mathematics, for example, when pupils record their findings in graph form, their ability to apply mathematics to practical situations and find solutions is not as well developed as it should be.

90. Year 2 pupils also have limited knowledge, skills and understanding in science. They are not encouraged enough to record their work in diagrams or as reports. This means they are not consolidating new knowledge and understanding well enough nor are they practising their literacy and presentation skills. Although the majority of pupils are interested in their science lessons, their limited skills in asking questions and clarifying their understanding is a barrier to their learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because of the extra support they are given in lessons. Pupils for whom English is an additional language do not achieve well enough because in some classes there is not enough emphasis on explaining new vocabulary and allowing pupils to use it.

91. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Pupils' science books however, show great inconsistencies between teachers' expectations. In some classes where expectations are high, pupils complete their work neatly and with good attention to detail. In other classes, a lack of clear direction means that pupils do not know how to present their investigations. In some classes, pupils have completed little work since last September. In a few classes, there is a strong emphasis on discussion, and pupils gain a much greater understanding of what they are learning. These pupils are better able to express their conclusions when writing. However, not all teachers provide these good opportunities.

92. Assessment procedures are not yet firmly established in science. This means that teachers often do not have enough information about the different levels that their pupils have reached in science. This makes it difficult for them to plan appropriate work. This is particularly the case in Years 1 to 4. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 assess pupils' work more systematically and target specific areas of weakness to try to raise standards. They have a clear plan for supporting Year 6 pupils before the national tests. The quality of marking is inconsistent between classes. Although teachers mark books regularly, they often do so with brief comments that do not explain to pupils what they need to do to improve.

93. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources have been organised to allow staff to plan more effectively for the national curriculum, particularly in relation to investigative science. A clear monitoring programme has not been established however, to ensure that weaknesses in provision are quickly identified and addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Resources are under-used in the computer suite and in classrooms.
- Pupils' work is not assessed systematically to enable teachers to plan work at appropriate levels for pupils.

Commentary

94. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are below national expectations. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. There has been very limited development in the subject since the last inspection when it was identified as an area requiring improvement.

95. The quality of teaching seen in the few lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Management of pupils is good and teachers explain practical tasks clearly. Teachers lack confidence however in using computers to support learning in classrooms. Many opportunities are missed to engage pupils' interest by allowing them to use computers to present their work in different ways or encourage them to undertake independent research.

96. There are sufficient computers in the school but they are not used enough. Most teaching takes place in the computer suite but some lessons are too short because of the way the school day is organised. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their new skills back in the classroom, to help their work in other subjects. Pupils' progress is not tracked to provide teachers with the information they need to plan suitable work for pupils at different levels. This means that lessons in the suite are the same for all pupils, with the most able finding the work too easy.

97. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinator to monitor provision, identify strengths and weaknesses and drive forward improvement. Since the previous co-ordinator left the school some months ago, no-one has taken responsibility for the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

98. There is very limited evidence of information and communication technology in pupils' work in any subject. Computers are seldom used in class lessons to engage and motivate pupils or to help them to practise skills they have learned in the suite.

HUMANITIES

99. No history lessons took place during the inspection, and only two geography lessons were observed. **Geography** and **history** are taught alternately each term. Careful planning ensures that pupils do not repeat topics as they move from single age classes to those with mixed year groups. There is little evidence of work being planned to cater for those of different abilities apart from those with special educational needs. There is very little recorded evidence in history. Written work in geography and history in Years 3 and 4 is very limited and is poorly presented.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes and many are keen to share their personal experiences with others.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education.
- Some lessons are too short, and pupils do not have time to complete activities.
- The school has established good links with local places of worship to extend pupils' understanding of different faiths.

Commentary

100. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the time pupils are in Years 2 and 6. This has much to do with the pupils' knowledge of

their own faith as well as that of their friends and good teaching. Achievement is good considering the many barriers to learning which pupils face.

101. Many pupils belong to a faith community, and teachers build on this experience successfully during lessons. Teachers provide good examples to the pupils in the way they value pupils' different religious beliefs. Consequently pupils are ready to share their knowledge and to join in discussions. Pupils learn to reflect sensitively about other faiths. They develop sound moral and social values as well as a respect for a range of different cultures.

102. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils could recall many features of a Christian church which they had visited. They understood and respected the symbolism even if they did not share the Christians' beliefs. Pupils watched a video about the life of Jesus quite intently, and showed genuine interest. The teacher stopped the film at suitable intervals to summarise, explain and ask questions. As a result pupils began to understand the concept of forgiveness from the Christian point of view. A pupil with special educational needs contributed well, and the teacher praised his knowledge, thus increasing his self-esteem. Good subject knowledge is at the root of these successful lessons. Teachers explain different concepts carefully and often organise imaginative activities to help pupils understand more clearly. In a Year 3/4 lesson on the Passover for example, the teacher had prepared a meal with the traditional foods, and pupils were really excited as they sat down to eat. This reinforced pupils' learning, and most could explain the symbolic meaning of the various foods. Pupils showed empathy for the Jews in Egypt and their deliverance from slavery.

103. Some religious education lessons are too short. A potentially good lesson in Year 3 was cut short when pupils had to leave to go to swimming. Pupils had enjoyed looking at a *Seder* plate, but had to wait until they returned to taste the foods. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils showed an emerging understanding of the meaning of Easter. They were keen to work on a well-prepared art activity, and were absorbed in painting and in making a collage. The lesson ran over into lunchtime, but time was too short for work to be completed and learning to be summarised. There is little evidence of extended written work in religious education, even by older pupils.

104. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school has recently established productive links with a mosque, a synagogue and with a church. Pupils are learning effectively about different faiths through visits to these places of worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

105. It was not possible to see any **art and design** or **music** lessons during the inspection. In art and design samples of pupils' previous work indicates that a wide range of skills are taught as pupils move through the school. Pupils can use a range of materials and techniques. They study the work of famous artists such as Gustav Klimt and Van Gogh and this helps them understand how styles have changed over time. Some teachers take every opportunity to use the good visual prompts in practical work to ensure that pupils value each other's home languages. For example, when younger pupils made a paper and paint collage of a variety of fruits, each item was identified in another language and script. The art club for gifted and talented pupils provides these pupils with very good opportunities to develop high standards in the subject. This is shown by their work on display around the school. It also provides other pupils with good examples of how different techniques can be used to create a stunning effect. Music, choir, participation in local music festivals adds to the overall programme for the subject.

106. In **design and technology**, teachers' plans in each year group include coverage of designing and making products and evaluating work, ensuring that all pupils of a similar age have access to the same range of experiences. In the lessons seen teachers planned well to build on pupils' previous learning and work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 used their knowledge of different food groups to decide the fillings for a healthy sandwich. Pupils evaluate the outcomes of their work carefully and consider appropriately how improvements can be made.

107. Only one lesson was seen in **physical education**. Opportunities are provided for all pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in gymnastics, dance and games. The school makes good use of specialist instructors to ensure that pupils are taught effective techniques. Coaches from local football and cricket clubs, for example, visit at different times of the year to take lessons. Swimming lessons are provided at a local pool for older pupils so that most pupils achieve nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

108. Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**. Much is covered through the religious education programme and science lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills when they attend the residential school journey or the annual 'sleepover' held in school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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