

INSPECTION REPORT

BRECKNOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Camden Town

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100010

Headteacher: Ms L Lefevre

Lead inspector: Mrs M Summers

Dates of inspection: 10-12 January 2005

Inspection number: 266482

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:	328
School address:	York Way London
Postcode:	N7 9QE
Telephone number:	020 7485 6334
Fax number:	020 7424 0110
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Orekan
Date of previous inspection:	22 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large school caters for 328 pupils between three and eleven years of age. Forty-four children attend the nursery, 29 full-time and 15 part-time. The school serves an area of considerable poverty and disadvantage. Most pupils come from surrounding housing estates, where crime levels are high. Pupils face many barriers to their learning, from those who come from very turbulent backgrounds to others who have recently arrived in the country from areas of conflict overseas. A few pupils come from more socially and economically advantaged families. More than half the pupils in the school are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is much greater than in most schools. About a quarter either begin or leave the school at times other than normal admission or leaving times. This is much higher than in most schools and presents a significant challenge to the school. Many different ethnic groups are represented. The largest group is of white British pupils and there are also large numbers of Bangladeshi and Black African pupils. Most other ethnic groups are represented in smaller numbers. More than half the pupils speak English as an additional language and a quarter are in the very early stages of learning English. There are far more pupils with special educational needs than in most schools and the percentage of pupils having a statement of special educational need is above average. Their needs are varied, from pupils with dyslexia to those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils start school at levels which are well below those expected for their age. Levels of communication, language and literacy are often very low.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

Brecknock Primary is a **good** and effective school. It is successfully committed to inclusion and pupils' achievement is good. The school is led and managed effectively and this has meant that many initiatives to raise standards have been introduced successfully over recent years. Teaching and learning are good overall. Because of its high cost per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The overall quality of teaching is good and is especially good in Years 2 and 3.
- The school plans and provides successfully for pupils' different needs and abilities. This means that all pupils achieve well.
- The school is led and managed effectively. There is a strong commitment amongst the staff towards inclusion and providing the best they can for the pupils.
- Children get a really good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- The school provides a very good range of clubs and activities outside the school day that add to pupils' positive learning experiences.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils are confident they can ask for help if required.
- Standards in English are well below national expectations in both Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6.
- Arrangements for swimming for pupils between Years 3 and 6 are unsatisfactory.
- Attendance levels are too low. Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but teachers seldom provide enough information to pupils about how to improve.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in March 1999. The very high turnover of pupils and an increase in the number of pupils at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language have presented considerable challenges. However, many good initiatives have been introduced to meet these and support pupils' achievements effectively. Nearly all the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Attendance levels, however, are still below average. ICT standards in Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection.

Standards achieved

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	B
mathematics	D	E	E	B
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' achievement is **good**. Most children start in the nursery at levels that are well below those expected for their age. They settle in quickly and start learning because of the good teaching and care they receive. As a result, they achieve well in all aspects of their development. However, when they transfer to Year 1, many are still below levels expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy because they are still developing confidence in English.

Pupils achieve successfully at the infant and junior stages. Although standards in the 2004 national tests were well below national expectations, they compared well to similar schools. Records show

that the achievement of pupils who have attended the school since Year 1 or 2, is very good . Most reach nationally expected levels for their age and a high proportion exceed them. This year, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to reach national standards in mathematics and science. Standards in English, however, are likely to be well below average. This reflects the high number of pupils who join the school in older year groups with little previous education and who are learning English as an additional language. The school is working hard with these pupils and they make significant gains in their learning in a short space of time. However, many are unlikely to reach the levels expected in English. Pupils' achievement in other subjects is generally good, especially in art and design where standards are above those expected nationally. Some pupils reach exceptionally high standards in music. Pupils reach good standards in ICT in Year 2, but their achievement in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.

Pupils display **good** personal qualities. Their spiritual development is satisfactory and their social and moral developments are good. Cultural development is very good. The school provides very effectively for this and, consequently, pupils have high levels of respect for one another's backgrounds and beliefs. Most pupils are keen, confident and enthusiastic learners. Behaviour is good. Pupils play happily in the playground and work together co-operatively in class. Attendance levels are below national figures. The school has developed some strategies to try to encourage good attendance, but these are not proactive or rigorous enough.

Quality of education

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and this leads to a calm atmosphere where pupils can concentrate on their work without interruption. Work is matched appropriately to pupils' individual needs so they all achieve well. Support staff have a considerable impact on pupils' learning. They take a keen interest in pupils and help them in many different ways. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but seldom provide useful comments to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Many aspects are good, but provision for ICT and swimming is unsatisfactory between Years 3 to 6. The school provides a very good range of extracurricular clubs and activities that help to make learning interesting and stimulating for the pupils. There are effective arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. Pupils with particular barriers to their learning are supported successfully, including those who are new to the school, those who speak little English and those with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school works hard to develop good relationships with parents. Many opportunities are available for parents to take an active part in their children's education. Good links with other schools and the community provide opportunities for pupils to further their learning within different surroundings.

Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are **good**. Leadership is based on a clear understanding of the particular circumstances of pupils, their families and of the local community. There is a strong drive for improvement. Most staff with different management responsibilities play effective roles. They monitor provision carefully and most plan effectively for the future. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors participate in planning for school improvement and carry out their responsibilities appropriately.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Parents are generally happy about the school's provision. They say their children are eager to come to school. They particularly appreciate the dynamic approach of many of the teachers and the fact that they find it easy to talk over any concerns with them. They say that the provision of homework is inconsistent and inspectors agree with this.

Improvements needed

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

- Improve standards in English throughout the school.
- Raise the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in ICT.
- Raise attendance levels.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking to provide pupils with information about how well they have done and what they have to do to improve.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Improve the provision for swimming in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Compared with national levels, mathematics and science standards are below average in Year 2 but they are average by the time pupils reach Year 6. English standards are well below average in both year groups. However, bearing in mind the low starting points of many pupils who begin in the nursery or who start in older year groups, pupils' achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics and science show considerable improvement this year.
- Achievement in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory between Years 3 and 6.
- Standards in art and design are above average in Year 6 and well above average in Year 2.
- Pupils who are talented musicians reach very high standards in instrumental performance.
- Standards in English are too low throughout the school.

Commentary

1. Children begin in the nursery at levels which are well below those expected for their age. Levels of attainment on entry to the school have fallen since the last inspection. This reflects the fact that far more pupils now begin at the school with limited previous education and speaking no English. Many of those who sit the national tests in Years 2 and 6 have only been at the school a relatively short time.

2. National test results and teacher assessments in 2004 showed pupils in Year 2 reaching well below average levels for their age. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Pupils achieved well, considering the high numbers who started school in the nursery, who had yet to begin learning English. The current pupils in Year 2 are on line to reach nationally expected levels by the end of the year in mathematics and science. This reflects considerable improvement since 2004. Reading and writing standards remain well below average and reflect the high numbers of pupils still developing confidence and fluency in English.

3. The 2004 national test results for pupils in Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Far more pupils than in similar schools reached the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 look likely to reach higher standards in mathematics and science than in 2004. They are on track to meet nationally expected levels. Standards in English remain well below average. Many pupils who have only recently joined the school in Years 3 to 6 have limited English skills. This affects their achievement, especially in writing.

4. The school's effective monitoring systems identified boys as reaching lower standards in writing than girls. Strategies were put into place to try to address this. These are showing signs of success, particularly in Years 1 to 5.

5. Because of the effective provision made for the children when they first start school in the nursery, they quickly settle in, feel confident within their surroundings and begin to learn effectively. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most are on line to meet the levels expected for children of their age in personal and social development, creative and physical development. However, their development of mathematical understanding and knowledge and understanding of the world is hindered by the fact that many are still at the early stages of learning English. Few children are on track to meet nationally expected levels in communication, language and literacy.

6. Many new pupils join the school when they are older. This is the case throughout the school but affects Years 3 to 6 particularly. The school makes good provision for these pupils, helping to make them feel welcome and keen to begin learning.

7. School records show clearly that those pupils who started school before Year 2 do very well indeed. Virtually all of those in Year 6 in 2004 who had remained at the school since Year 2, reached nationally expected levels in the tests. A good number of them reached the higher Level 5. This reflects the school's good teaching, management and care of pupils. The most able pupils make effective progress in nearly all subjects, especially in music.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. They receive good support from well-trained and effective support staff and their class teachers who plan work for them that is at an appropriate level. Individual education plans are written carefully and include clear and attainable targets.

9. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. This good achievement is a direct result of good teaching and effective support from specialist staff. Most of these pupils are engaged in their learning and confidently attempt the challenges set. Planned work includes opportunities for speaking and listening, the use of visual aids and support from peers or well directed support staff.

10. The school's good provision for art and design means that pupils reach levels above those expected nationally in Year 6. In Year 2 standards are well above those expected for their age. The school has maintained a firm commitment towards developing pupils' creative talents and provision reflects this. This is further seen in some older pupils' excellent instrumental skills in recorder and trumpet.

11. Whilst ICT standards remain high in Year 2 as at the last inspection, standards in Year 6 have dropped. Although standards are broadly average for pupils' age, the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory because they have made insufficient progress since Year 2. This is due to weaknesses in teaching and the leadership and management of the subject.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (13.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.5 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.3 (15.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 44 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 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (25.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.5 (24.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.3 (25.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy their school day. The school makes good provision for their personal development and, as a result, they become confident individuals. They are developing a very good understanding of their own and other's cultural traditions and respect the values and beliefs of others.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.
- The school's approach to managing behaviour is very effective and, as a result, pupils behave well.
- There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development that results in good relationships and a high degree of racial harmony.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent.
- Attendance levels are below the national average.

Commentary

12. Pupils like coming to school and most arrive on time. They are excited by what they learn in lessons and are enthusiastic about the visits and after school activities. Most concentrate well on their work.

13. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and a clear policy is implemented consistently and fairly. There are a few pupils in each class whose behaviour is challenging, but they are managed well. Children appreciate the rewards offered in the form of certificates and understand the sanctions for misbehaving. As a result, behaviour throughout the school day is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. All incidents of poor behaviour are recorded, monitored and dealt with successfully. Those pupils who find it difficult to behave appropriately are supported by learning mentors or the Behaviour Support team from the local authority.

14. Pupils with special educational needs who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed successfully in class and during breaks. They are helped by their teachers, support staff and midday supervisors to become valued members of the school community. They respond well to this positive approach and are fully included in all activities.

15. The good provision made for children's personal development ensures that they are confident and enjoy good relationships with one another. They have excellent relationships with adults and feel confident they can turn to someone in the school if they have any problems. New pupils are welcomed and this helps them settle in quickly. Regular concerts and class assemblies develop pupils' self esteem and the responsibilities of being playground buddies or members of the School Council are taken seriously. Pupils are aware the difference between right and wrong and learn to share and cooperate well from an early age. They work well collaboratively, for example, in pairs in gymnastics.

16. The school celebrates the multicultural and multilingual backgrounds of the pupils. It raises the status and awareness of different ethnic groups by using home languages in all displays and through activities, such as Black History Month, Refugee Week and International Evenings. This enables pupils to gain a greater understanding and respect for the cultural traditions of their peers.

17. Many activities, including assemblies and the personal, social and health education curriculum, support moral and social development well, for example, by agreeing classroom rules. The provision for cultural development is very good. During Refugee Week there is an International Evening for pupils and their families with dance demonstrations and food from around the world cooked by parents. Blues Workshops and an Aboriginal dance performance took place during Black History month. During the inspection the recorder group performed pieces of music from

different sources and pupils in the audience listened with obvious enjoyment. The planned provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.2	School data	0.8
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

18. Attendance levels are below national figures. The school gives rewards to classes for attendance and punctuality and reminds parents regularly about the importance of attendances in newsletters. Attendance is recorded and monitored carefully and the school is working well with the educational welfare officers to follow up cases of children with very poor attendance. However, the school is too slow in pursuing families each day for explanations as to why their child is not in school.

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	89	2	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	39	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	48	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	0	0
Black or Black British – African	78	9	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	14	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	17	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

19. Exclusions last year were high, particularly amongst Black or Black British African boys. The headteacher and governors were keen to apply the school's new behaviour policy consistently yet fairly. This resulted in a period where exclusions were high as the systems bedded in. The school's high expectations and the sanctions in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour are now well known to staff, pupils and parents. Behaviour is generally good and this year there have been only two fixed term exclusions, showing the effectiveness of the policy.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils are well taught and receive a varied and well-organised curriculum. They are cared for and supported well and benefit from the school's good links with other schools and the community. Links with parents are effective.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Effective assessment systems help teachers to set work at appropriate levels to meet the different needs of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils very well and this results in a calm and supportive atmosphere which is conducive to good learning.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are supported very well and receive work which is matched appropriately to their needs.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and encourage and engage them well in lessons.
- Support staff are deployed very well and have a major impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teachers provide many good opportunities for bilingual pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in English.
- Marking seldom provides pupils with enough information about what they have to do to improve.
- Homework is not set consistently enough to ensure pupils practise the skills they have learned in school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	13 (22%)	28 (47%)	17 (28%)	2 (3%)	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.

20. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This judgement is the same as that formed at the last inspection, six years ago. It reflects the good systems the school has in place to recruit and retain staff and to monitor and develop their professional skills.

21. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Children are warmly welcomed and quickly settle and begin learning. Assessment procedures are very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of these children and plan appropriate activities to help them move on in their learning. This results in the children becoming confident and enthusiastic, and willing to take advantage of the many opportunities offered.

22. At the infant and junior stages, teaching is particularly strong in Years 2 and 3. In these classes, teachers' obvious enjoyment and their commitment to their pupils have a really positive effect on their pupils' achievement.

23. Throughout the school there is a very positive learning atmosphere. This is achieved through teachers having very good relationships with their pupils. There is a formal acknowledgement of the school rules but within this, informal relationships encourage pupils to try their best and value each other. This makes for very good management of pupils. The school recognises the need to maintain this as a high priority and their work on establishing new behaviour

guidelines has been very successful. The high number of pupil exclusions in the past has dropped significantly this year.

24. The school's work on improving lesson planning has also been particularly successful. One of the strong features of most lessons seen during the inspection, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, was the good attention paid to meeting the different needs of individual pupils. This means that pupils of all abilities are catered for effectively, including the brightest pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

25. Most subjects are taught effectively and this leads to pupils' good achievement. ICT however, is an under-developed subject right across the school. Pupils in Year 2 receive good quality provision from an outside specialist teacher but the quality of teaching and learning within other year groups is unsatisfactory. Teachers are not planning for pupils to use it consistently in lessons, both to practise computer skills and to enhance their learning in other subjects.

26. There is good provision for the many pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers use a range of good strategies to support these pupils' learning. The good use of visual aids and clear introduction and explanation of key vocabulary help bilingual pupils develop their understanding, fluency and confidence in English. 'Talk partners' are also used to enable more proficient English speakers to model appropriate language and help pupils to rehearse their responses. Good questioning also engages and challenges the thinking of these pupils.

27. Teachers and support staff give very good support in class to those pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers use the skilled support staff very effectively and brief them fully about their role in each lesson. Assistants working with statemented pupils keep a careful record of the achievements of the pupils to share with the teacher and show the progress each pupil has made. This is a great help when planning future work as it enables it to be pitched at an appropriate level and help the pupils achieve well.

28. Pupils' work is marked regularly but seldom provides information about how pupils can improve. Pupils show positive attitudes and are keen to do well and this lack of ongoing feedback is an area rightly identified by the school as requiring improvement.

29. Homework is another area which is not exploited to its fullest extent. The provision of homework varies from class to class. Opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned in school and take further responsibility for their learning, are missed.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enriched by a very good level and range of additional activities. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of stimulating educational activities.
- All pupils have complete access to the curriculum and are fully included in all aspects.
- Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory.
- There is no provision for swimming in Years 3 to 6.
- Some subject policies, for example, religious education, art and design and ICT are out of date.

Commentary

30. The curriculum meets statutory requirements except in swimming. There is suitable provision for sex and drug abuse education. Pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 learn to swim in

the school's learner pool but there is no provision for older pupils to have swimming instruction. This means that pupils who join the school after Year 2 do not have the opportunity to learn to swim.

31. Although curriculum provision is satisfactory overall, some subject policies are out-of-date and have not been reviewed for many years. This means that new staff do not always have appropriate guidance when they first start.

32. The richness of the curriculum makes an important contribution to the pupils' good attitudes to learning. Pupils become eager learners because they are given interesting and thoughtfully planned work in their lessons. There are appropriate links between some subjects, for example, art and design and technology, which helps to make learning more relevant to the pupils. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to use literacy and ICT skills in different subjects.

33. The school gives pupils many opportunities to sample and enjoy experiences and activities over and above those included in the National Curriculum. The very good level of quality clubs held at lunchtime and after school covers a range of sporting and other activities. The level of participation in sport, some of it competitive, and in art, dance and drama is very good. Pupils in all years also go out of school regularly to visit museums and other places of educational interest. These are carefully planned to improve their knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and geography. Workshops and themed days such as the maths 'fun day' are a great success with all pupils absorbed in a range of planned activities and parents being involved at the end of the day. The residential journey by Year 6 pupils to Kent enables pupils to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities as well as learning to live together harmoniously in an environment away from home. Visitors to the school, for example the storyteller, help provide a focus to learning by making the work much more interesting for the pupils.

34. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Where appropriate, the work they are given by their teachers is linked to the targets in their individual education plans and is specifically designed to help them achieve well. Pupils are given full access to the curriculum and receive very good quality help from a strong team of skilled and very competent support staff who make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. When working outside the class with support staff, the pupils are usually engaged in tasks that match the work of the other pupils in the class so that they do not miss any important learning.

35. There is good support for pupils with English as an additional language. Different year groups receive additional support each term according to need. Children in the Foundation Stage also benefit from a bilingual teaching assistant to help them communicate in their home language. This also makes them feel more comfortable and at home in their new surroundings.

36. Pupils are highly valued and fully included in every aspect of school life. Staff are committed to treating pupils with respect and consideration at all times. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are constantly encouraged to do their best through a curriculum that is both challenging and exciting.

37. The school is well staffed with teachers who have a range of expertise in different subject areas. Teachers willingly share their skills and knowledge with colleagues when planning the curriculum. The learning support staff are well qualified and give very good support to the pupils they work with. As a result, pupils are able to achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school.

38. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively to the pupils. It is also considerably brightened up by some colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work. However, there are not enough staff lavatories for the numbers of adults in the school. Some are locked and one lavatory was out of order for a time during the inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are effective. The pastoral care of children is very good and ensures pupils are settled, happy and secure and, as a result, receptive to learning. Pupils are effectively involved in the development of the school through the school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual pupils are well known to staff. Pupils have extremely trusting relationships with adults and this helps them feel safe and ready to learn.
- Pupils receive very good levels of support and guidance and this helps remove some of the barriers to their learning.
- The School Council is effective in giving pupils a role in running the school.

Commentary

39. A satisfactory health and safety policy is in place and action is taken promptly to address any concerns. The issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. There is appropriate coverage for First Aid and detailed records are kept of any accidents. Child Protection procedures are clear and staff are aware of them.

40. The level of pastoral care is high and staff make great efforts to ensure that individual pupils who are experiencing difficulties with their learning or their behaviour, are supported. This is an area that has improved since the last inspection. For example, learning mentors work with pupils in Year 5 and 6 on an individual or group basis and the Home School Liaison worker assists families with housing problems or parenting issues. Tailored programmes are implemented for pupils using outside agencies to support them with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

41. Pupils with special educational needs are tracked carefully to monitor their progress and to ensure that they are achieving as well as possible. Their individual education plans are written carefully, set appropriately challenging targets and are regularly reviewed. Liaison with outside agencies is good and the school makes great efforts to ensure that pupils receive as high a level of care as possible. The seven statemented pupils in the school receive their full entitlement as outlined in their statements of educational need.

42. Pupils with English as an additional language are assessed for their competency in English language skills on entry to the school. They are supported effectively in most classes where teachers provide good opportunities for them to develop their language skills.

43. The school runs a Saturday school that is attended by sixty pupils who are underachieving or who have behaviour problems. Outings and projects are exciting and varied and give pupils very good opportunities to develop their academic and personal skills. The school also manages an after school tea time club that supports families well.

44. Induction procedures into the nursery are good; each child is visited at home before they start and time is taken to ensure that children settle in well. The headteacher meets all parents of mid-term arrivals and new pupils confirm they are made very welcome when they start.

45. The school council meets at least twice a term and discusses issues such as playground improvements. Staff have adopted their suggestions about the sanctions to be taken against pupils found breaking the school rule regarding chewing gum. The council has invited councillors and staff from the local council to their meeting and are due to attend a meeting at the Borough council chambers later this term to see how official business is discussed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The relationship the school has developed with parents is effective and supports both pupils and their families well. The school has established good links with other schools and with the local community, which broadens the experience of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school reaches out to all its parents in a variety of ways to inform them about their child's education and to encourage them to become more involved.
- Liaison with other schools through the local Education Action Zone enriches the curriculum.

Commentary

46. Parents receive good information about the life of the school and the curriculum through fortnightly newsletters and a detailed prospectus. Parents of Foundation Stage and infant pupils are welcomed into school at the start of each day to read with their child, thus addressing the issue raised in the last inspection about encouraging more parents to read with their children. All teachers take their classes to the playground at the end of each day and are available to talk to parents then as well as at the after school tea on Fridays. These good strategies give parents the opportunity to chat informally with teachers and to raise any concerns before they become too serious.

47. There are regular formal parent teacher conferences and, at the start of each academic year, a meeting is held by each class teacher to outline the curriculum that will be taught each term. There are specific meetings about the curriculum, for example a Family Mathematics Day, to help parents understand what the school is doing and how parents can support their children. A detailed annual report gives parents a good understanding of the progress of their child and outlines areas for development. Regular questionnaires to parents are used in improving the provision. Parent surgeries have been introduced to allow parents opportunities to raise any concerns.

48. 'Meet and greet' coffee mornings are arranged weekly with guest speakers, such as the manager of the local Education Action Zone or Surestart. Many parents have attended Family Learning courses in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. The 'Helping in School' course has led to a number of parents assuming support staff positions at the school and elsewhere. Concerns raised through the school's monitoring programme about the progress made by Somali and Bengali pupils has led to successful Somali and Bengali homework clubs being set up. Parents attend with their children and receive very good advice about how to support and help with homework. Weekly English classes are also attended well by parents who are in the early stages of learning the language. The Home School Liaison worker is instrumental in many of these initiatives. In addition, very useful advice and guidance is offered to parents on a range of issues such as parenting skills and housing problems. In these ways parents are becoming more involved in supporting pupils, and in developing their own skills. The school continues to work with specific parents to try to encourage more regular attendance by their children.

49. The school involves parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs from the moment their child is identified as being in need of additional help. They are always invited to meetings to review individual education plans. Parents are welcome to discuss the provision with the class teachers and the special needs coordinator at times other than the review meetings.

50. Arrangements for secondary transfer are good. Information is shared formally between schools and learning mentors support those pupils who may find the transition to secondary school more difficult.

51. The school's links with other schools through the local Education Action Zone are successful and this partnership enriches pupils' experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils visit the local secondary schools for additional ICT sessions and a story teller funded through this scheme works with all pupils weekly to develop speaking and listening skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The school is led effectively by the headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteachers. Management structures are firmly in place and mostly effective in bringing about improvement to the quality of provision and to pupils' achievement. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong commitment towards ensuring that all pupils, no matter what their needs or abilities, are catered for effectively within the school's provision.
- Additional grants are used very successfully to improve provision for the pupils.
- There are good systems in place for the professional development of staff.
- Most subjects are led and managed effectively, except for ICT where improvement has not been planned for effectively.

Commentary

52. Leadership is firm and principled. It concentrates on improving the quality of provision for the pupils so they can achieve as highly as possible. There is a clear commitment towards inclusion. All pupils are viewed and treated as individuals. Staff work hard to ensure all pupils are catered for effectively and their needs met. Some innovative systems have been introduced, for example, weekly sessions for Bengali and Somalian parents to help them support their children with homework. These are proving successful in terms of raising expectations and achievement and also have the added benefit of establishing positive relations with these groups within the community. Work with pupils from refugee families helps them to settle in quickly and become active learners.

53. Senior staff play an effective part in ensuring good quality provision. Established members of the senior management team play a key role in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school as well as providing examples of good practice to other staff. Good strategies have been implemented to raise standards in science for example, which have already been successful. Work done to improve the quality of literacy provision in Year 1 is also showing good results. These are both signs that show the school evaluates its provision carefully and takes action to address weaknesses.

54. The school is currently introducing new systems to help it track and analyse pupils' progress and achievement over time more successfully. Data has not been used efficiently in the past to check that specific cohorts of pupils have made sufficient progress.

55. The support given by senior staff is only one of the ways in which the school provides for the professional development of its staff. Performance management systems are firmly in place and individual targets are fixed with wider school aims in mind. Teachers and support staff attend training courses to improve their own performance and this impacts successfully on the provision for pupils.

56. The special educational needs provision is managed very effectively. Pupils' achievements are tracked carefully. An extremely useful profile is kept for every pupil with special educational needs. It is used very effectively to outline the provision and the interventions put in place to help pupils learn. Paperwork is kept up-to-date and outside agencies are consulted and involved fully when required. Provision meets statutory requirements fully.

57. The Ethnic Minority Achievement co-ordinator provides a good model of effective teaching and has led some useful training for staff about the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. There are no systems established, however, to check how successfully teachers have used this knowledge and understanding to support their day-to-day work in class.

58. Nearly all subjects are led and managed successfully. English, mathematics, science, art and design are monitored well to identify weaknesses. Action is taken promptly and provision is therefore good in these subjects. ICT however, has not been led or managed well enough and this has led to a drop in the level of provision since the last inspection. The lack of provision for swimming between Years 3 and 6 has not been addressed quickly enough.

59. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body represents the wide ethnic mix of the school community. This enables the different views and needs of parents to be considered when key decisions are being taken. Governors have established committees to help them carry out their responsibilities appropriately. There is room, however, for more effective systems to be established to help them monitor curriculum provision more closely.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,701,708	Balance from previous year	110,646
Total expenditure	1,602,007	Balance carried forward to the next	99,700
Expenditure per pupil	4,500		

60. Strategic development is determined appropriately by the headteacher and governors. Plans are considered annually and priorities agreed. The school's improvement plan is satisfactory. Costs of individual projects are not identified clearly enough however, and this makes it difficult for governors to determine the effectiveness of their spending decisions. Financial systems are satisfactory. All recommendations from the last financial audit have been carried out. The school carries forward more funds than are normally acceptable from year to year. Governors are planning significant improvements to the premises that will make the building more accessible for disabled pupils and parents. Funds are therefore being accrued to help support these improvements.

61. The school makes very good use of funds which it receives as additional grants to raise the level of provision for pupils. There is clear evidence that this is raising standards. Education Action Zone funds, for example, contribute to the cost of the school home liaison worker and fund the story teller as well as extra teaching assistant time. The Excellence in Cities programme funds the Learning Mentors who have a significant impact on the learning and behaviour of pupils at risk of exclusion. A Saturday School is a new venture for the school funded by a charitable trust. This exciting project is co-ordinated very effectively by one of the staff and targets pupils who need further support with literacy, numeracy and behaviour. Although it is too soon to judge the impact on pupils' achievement, early indications are very encouraging.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children who enter the nursery and Reception have widely varying levels of experience. Overall, however, levels of attainment are well below average compared with those found nationally, particularly in some aspects of language development and personal and social development. Over four fifths of the children who enter the nursery are learning English as an additional language, and many of these are at the very early stages.

63. Achievement is good in this part of the school because of good teaching. Specific additional support for those children at the early stages of learning English is good. All classes benefit from time with a support teacher and nursery children work with an experienced bi-lingual assistant. Children with special educational needs are identified early and also achieve well.

64. Induction arrangements are good. The school is sensitive to the needs of young children and arrangements reflect this. Staff work hard to ensure that children settle happily into the nursery and Reception class settings. Most, but not all children are on track to achieve the expected Early Learning Goals in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and in aspects of Creative and Physical Development.

65. Leadership is currently satisfactory and day-to-day management is good. The staff teams work effectively in each class and responsibilities are clearly defined. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching has been maintained. Planning is in line with national guidance for children of this age and procedures for assessing individual children's progress are very good. This data is used very well in planning the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in this aspect is very good and children make very good progress.
- Behaviour is consistently good and children enjoy learning.
- Relationships between adults and children are very good.
- Children develop good levels of concentration.

Commentary

66. Strong teaching in this aspect of development underpins learning in all classes. Progress is very good and most children are on track to meet the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Routines are very clearly established and almost all children feel secure and confident. Staff are very sensitive to individual needs and work with parents to help children settle in. All adults have high expectations of good behaviour and their consistent approach ensures that children soon understand what is expected. Children are usually absorbed in their activities. Staff deal with occasional incidents, such as sand throwing, calmly and promptly. They help children to understand that they must learn to share, to take turns and to think of others. Activities are well planned and stimulating and children are motivated to learn. Concentration levels are good and many children in the nursery focus for quite long periods on activities. A few children lack confidence, for example after transferring to Reception from the nursery. Teachers are quick to note this and to plan ways to help them join in activities.

67. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those where children work independently. Most older nursery children choose activities confidently and many have developed good levels of concentration. Adults encourage children to be independent, and most help to tidy up or take registers to the office. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Children can be confident that adults will listen to them and know that their efforts are valued.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to talk about their activities.
- Most children do not recognise many letter sounds and this slows the development of reading and spelling skills.
- Children are encouraged to develop early writing skills through a good range of purposeful activities.
- Sometimes the brightest children are not extended enough in their learning.

Commentary

68. Progress over this area of learning is satisfactory overall and is strongest in the development of speaking and listening skills. All children make good progress in this aspect and steady progress in acquiring reading and writing skills. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in promoting speaking and listening skills. By the end of the Reception year, however, few children reach the expected standards. Most children come from homes where English is an additional language and many have very limited English vocabularies.

69. In both the nursery and the Reception classes there is a constant focus on developing speaking and listening skills. Staff reinforce language at every opportunity, modelling sentences correctly as they work alongside children. The children are encouraged to talk about their activities and gain confidence within a very supportive atmosphere. Role-play activities such as the “vet’s surgery” have a high profile and staff are very skilled extending the children’s play. Some children depend very heavily on this adult support in order to talk to others.

70. Children have ready access to books and enjoy stories. They handle books with care and understand that print carries meaning. Nursery children enjoy sharing books with an adult. Elements of the literacy hour are introduced in the Reception classes, but most children are only just beginning to recognise initial letter sounds. Few recognise any simple words. The school is introducing a new system for teaching sounds and letters and this is showing early signs of success. In a lively lesson in one class, for example, children responded very well as they linked sounds and actions. By the end of the session many could distinguish between words starting with *m* and *s*. In this lesson, higher attaining children were extended, but this is not the case in all literacy periods.

71. Children have good opportunities in the nursery for early writing activities during play, and are encouraged to write alongside the teacher. Some attempt to copy words and begin to write their names. Reception children have suitable opportunities for writing independently during play, and take part in formal writing activities with adults. Samples of phonics worksheets indicate that not enough attention is paid to teaching correct letter formation.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to count accurately and they begin to use numbers in various activities.
- Sometimes, activities are not matched well enough to children's different needs.

Commentary

72. Teaching is good overall. From the time they start in the nursery children are encouraged to count, to compare and to recognise numbers and shapes. Activities are enjoyable and resources are good. Reception children enjoyed selecting shapes from a bag and naming them, and a group worked well as they went on a "shape hunt" along the corridor. Children at the early stages of learning English make very good progress when they work with the support teacher. Specific vocabulary is carefully emphasised and children become confident to try out new activities. Staff involve children regularly in counting activities throughout the day. They check the register numbers, count how many legs they have painted on a cat, and count ducks as they fish in a pretend pond. Singing rhymes and games are used effectively to help children remember numbers and order.

73. By the time they leave Reception, children have made good progress, but the proportion of children meeting the expected standard is below average. Higher attaining children count to 20 confidently and are beginning to understand the concept of addition. Samples of work indicate that activities are not always varied sufficiently to cater for the very wide range of needs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and children achieve well.
- Activities are stimulating and resources are good.

Commentary

74. Progress is in this aspect good, but by the time children leave the Reception classes standards are below average. Many children have a restricted range of vocabulary when they start school and some have quite limited experiences of the world around them.

75. Visits are arranged to widen children's knowledge and themes are carefully chosen. Teaching in this aspect is good and includes planned use of the outdoor area when possible. Children enjoy a good variety of interesting and motivating activities. A shared theme offers both the nursery and Reception children a stimulating focus and staff are able to repeat vocabulary in different situations. This makes learning a coherent experience for children and they gain confidence with new words and ideas. Role-play is used very effectively. The vet's surgery successfully engaged children's interest and staff built well on children's familiarity with features such as queues, stethoscopes and medicines. Children are not always sure of the names of animals, but are encouraged to talk about them as they paint, wait in the "waiting room" or take part in a counting activity. Interest and curiosity is stimulated by other activities, for example a table with magnets and metal objects.

76. Assessments by staff show that children are often slow to ask questions, and so the adults model questioning well as they work alongside children. Resources are of good quality so that

activities are attractively presented. Children have satisfactory access to computers and in the nursery mouse skills are taught very effectively as children are helped to use simple programs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities for outdoor activities.
- Teaching is good and children make good progress.

Commentary

77. Teaching in this aspect is good and children make good progress. Most children are on track to achieve the expected standards for their age by the time they leave the Reception class. Poor weather during the inspection restricted the use of the outdoor area, but the teachers' plans include daily opportunities for energetic play.

78. Both Reception classes have formal physical education lessons in the hall. These prepare children well for the move to Year 1, as well as developing a range of movement skills. Many activities in the nursery and in the Reception classes promote the development of small motor skills. Children work with a variety of different tools and equipment and experience a good range of materials. They learn to control scissors, brushes, pens and pencils with increasing dexterity. Staff guide children carefully in the correct use, for example, of scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good.
- Role-play activities are used very effectively to stimulate children's imaginations.

Commentary

79. Children make good progress in creative development because of a variety of carefully planned activities. Good quality resources play a part, but the most significant factor is the quality of the teaching from teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants. Staff talk constantly to children as they work with them, explaining, encouraging and providing a commentary on what they are doing. This good modelling of language helps the children to increase their vocabulary and try out new words.

80. The role-play corners attract many children. Staff are skilled in modelling imaginative play and in extending children's play by building on their ideas. Children have good opportunities to extend and consolidate their learning independently as well as by working with adults. Reception class children have formal music lessons, but teachers in both year groups use singing well during the day. Children enjoy taking part in action songs and rhymes. Most children are on track to meet the expected standards by the time they leave Reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good and recent initiatives are beginning to have an impact on standards.
- Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils achieve well from their initial starting points.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- Provision for reading has improved since the last inspection.
- Standards in English are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

81. Standards in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were well below the national average. Results compared favourably, however, with those in similar schools. Standards have been rising gradually since 2001.

82. The school caters well for more able pupils and those identified as gifted and talented. This enables them to achieve well in English. However, many pupils enter the school later than the usual time. A large number of these pupils are learning English as an additional language. Some have not attended school before. The school offers these pupils good support and, as a consequence, they achieve well. Despite this, standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 in all aspects of English are still well below average. The school is working hard to improve provision across the school to try to raise overall standards.

83. Leadership and management of English are good. Recent changes are beginning to have an impact on learning. Boys' achievement was rightly identified by the school as being weaker than that of girls. Strategies have been introduced to try to address this and there are signs to show they are being successful, particularly in younger classes between Years 1 and 5. The school has revised planning systems and work is now presented more coherently, allowing teachers to develop aspects of English over two weeks. Year 6 pupils are taught in groups arranged according to ability. This allows teachers to focus more closely on the needs of individuals and small groups.

84. Teaching is good, and pupils are generally achieving well in lessons. Planning is clear and cohesive, activities are matched well to pupils' capabilities and pupils with special educational needs are given effective support. Teachers give praise and encouragement regularly during lessons, but the quality of marking is not consistently good. Pupils are not always clear about how they might improve their work.

85. In many lessons the teaching methods are lively and varied, capturing the interest of pupils. Most lessons offer good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their speaking skills. Teachers have good questioning skills and usually give pupils the chance to give extended answers. In many classes pupils have "speaking partners" that allows all pupils to be involved in discussing key ideas. In a Year 3 class, for example, the teacher and learning support assistant modelled a speaking activity extremely well, inspiring pupils to have a go themselves. Such strategies are valuable for all pupils, but particularly for those learning English as an additional language. Progress in acquiring speaking skills is good, with pupils starting from a low base. The contrast is very marked between Year 1, where pupils find it hard to talk with their partners, and Year 2 where pairs talk quite readily. Detailed discussion of writing activities is proving a valuable tool for helping pupils order their ideas before they start to write.

86. Provision for reading has improved since the last inspection and standards by the end of Year 2 have risen. The school now has a good stock of reading books and guided reading sessions are organised carefully. In general, books are now matched well to individual needs. Phonic skills are taught well and Year 2 pupils tackle unfamiliar words by sounding them out, as well as using other skills. By Year 6, most pupils have preferred authors, and average and higher attainers read fluently and competently. However, there are a significant number of pupils who lack confidence in their skills and have quite a limited range of vocabulary to support their reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

87. Samples of work indicate that pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their reading and writing skills to extend their learning in different subjects. There are a few examples of useful work being done in, for example, history and design and technology. However, work in pupils' books in religious education, science and geography is limited and shows that they are not routinely encouraged to record their work. This limits the opportunities they have to practise and develop their literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and are now similar to those found nationally.
- Teaching is good so pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work.
- The subject is led and managed successfully.
- Marking of pupils' work gives little guidance for future improvement.

Commentary

95. The standards attained in the 2004 tests taken by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were well below the national average. However, Year 6 pupils were attaining standards above those found in similar schools and pupils in Year 2 were in line.

96. 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 represents good improvement since last year and is a direct result of the good teaching the pupils receive and the impact of a number of effective initiatives designed to raise standards. Lesson planning has been improved and in Year 6, pupils are now divided into classes according to ability. Such initiatives are proving successful in meeting the needs of pupils of different capabilities. A mathematics 'fun day' also helped raise the profile of the subject within the school community and increased pupils' enthusiasm.

97. Teaching is good. The planning of numeracy work is particularly effective as it is closely matched to the needs of the individual pupils and helps them learn at a good rate. The setting of pupils in Year 6 is also having a positive effect on progress as teachers can plan work more closely matched to the prior attainment of pupils. Also, as three groups are formed from the two classes, they have fewer pupils to teach and are able to give them more individual attention. Teachers use support staff very effectively to help those pupils who find the work hard or have behavioural difficulties. Teachers include the role of support staff in their planning and brief them fully before each lesson. They manage their classes very well and create a good working atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively. Relationships are particularly strong and there is a great deal of mutual respect evident in classes.

98. Pupils respond well to the good teaching. They are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. They are proud of their many achievements. They present their work neatly in their books and the

vast majority successfully complete the work set for them. Their behaviour in lessons is good and they willingly join in discussions. This was clearly seen in a Year 6 lesson about solving word problems in which the pupils made many useful and perceptive comments, suggesting suitable strategies to find the correct answer to some difficult questions.

99. The subject is led and managed successfully. There is a strong focus on raising standards. The provision is monitored carefully to identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, number work was found to need more attention and this has been successfully addressed through teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are good and are used to track individual pupils to show their progress as they move through the school.

100. Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately with some encouraging and supportive comments added. Marking does not, however, often help pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve further. There is a little self-assessment by pupils but many remain unaware of exactly how well they are doing and how to attain a higher level in their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

101. The pupils' skills in mathematics are sometimes used in other subjects of the curriculum. 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 measure in design and technology and record their findings graphically in science. Not enough use of ICT is made to support pupils' learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a low starting point on entry to the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The leadership and management of science is very good.
- Although some investigative science is planned for, it is not yet embedded in practice in all year groups.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly but seldom give them useful pointers for improvement.

Commentary

95. The standards attained at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in the 2004 national tests and assessments showed that standards were well below the national average but were broadly in line with those achieved in similar schools. Evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils indicate that, this year, standards will be higher. Standards in Year 2 are likely to be below, rather than well below nationally expected levels. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet national standards in the subject. The school has set challenging targets for these pupils which look likely to be achieved. This represents very good improvement that is a direct result of the successful leadership and management of the subject.

96. Achievement is good across the school because of the high quality of teaching that pupils receive. It is also supported by the pupils' good attitudes in lessons that shows in their high levels of interest, concentration and good behaviour.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' plans clearly identify the objectives for lessons, key vocabulary and questions to be asked. Expectations for learning and behaviour are high, and all pupils are challenged in their scientific thinking. Additional staff are used very successfully to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs or English as an

additional language. These pupils are supported well by clear explanations and the use of visual aids. This ensures that all pupils make good progress and can talk confidently about their learning.

98. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide variety of scientific topics. They are developing their understanding of scientific processes successfully. For example, pupils are starting to question why there is a need for a fair test and how variables affect an experiment. However, the level of investigative science varies across the school. Where teachers are more confident in their teaching and knowledge of science, opportunities for investigations are more frequently planned. As a result, pupils' experience and opportunities vary between classes and year groups. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but rarely identifies pupils' achievement or what they have to do to improve. In some classes, pupils do not record enough of their science work in books. This means that opportunities are missed to practise their literacy skills.

99. The leadership and management of science are very good. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the school and of the priorities required to further raise standards of attainment. Very good subject knowledge and a real enthusiasm for science enable the co-ordinator to provide a really good model of teaching. Effective strategies are in place to share this good practice with other staff to try to raise the level of teaching and thereby impact on pupils' achievements. Effective monitoring strategies enable weaknesses in the curriculum to be identified and appropriate action taken.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good use of outside resources to help pupils in Year 2 develop effective skills and knowledge.
- Pupils do not use computers well enough within class lessons to support their work in a range of different subjects.
- Standards have fallen in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection because of unsatisfactory teaching and inadequate strategic planning and monitoring of the subject.

Commentary

100. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were found to be good throughout the school. Standards remain above average in Year 2 but standards in Year 6 have fallen and are now just in line with nationally expected levels. This is because the rate of improvement in the school has not kept pace with national developments. The lack of effective monitoring and strategic planning has led to resources being unsatisfactory.

101. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well. These pupils have a weekly lesson at The Arsenal Study Support Centre at Holloway School. This gives them access to very high quality resources and teaching on a weekly basis, which have a positive impact on standards.

102. Pupils reach the standards expected of them by the end of Year 6 but their achievement is unsatisfactory, considering the high levels they reach in Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning in this part of the school is unsatisfactory. Teachers often spend far too long demonstrating skills to the class and this makes pupils bored and restless. This was noted in an unsatisfactory Year 3 lesson, when pupils' behaviour and concentration suffered because of a lack of practical involvement. However, a Year 6 lesson showed pupils making satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets. Sound planning and the provision of good advice to pupils helped them achieve appropriately. Pupils in this year group have covered many of the required aspects of the subject but are not yet confident in the use of control and monitoring equipment, digital cameras or how to use email.

103. Clubs are held at lunch times and after school in the computer suite. These provide useful opportunities for pupils to work or play on computers. Some pupils in the clubs do not have a computer at home and some do not have regular access to the Internet. The enrichment opportunities provided by the school are helping these pupils to develop their confidence and further their computer skills.

104. The subject has not been led and managed effectively to ensure that provision keeps pace with national developments. The subject policy and strategic plan for development are inadequate to drive forward improvement successfully. Provision has not been monitored well enough to identify the weaknesses in teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

105. There are few opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects. Links planned are often ineffective and do not happen often enough to really be successful in developing pupils' skills and knowledge. Computers are rarely used in classrooms to support pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

106. Three lessons were observed in **religious education** and five in **history**. None were observed in **geography** and it is therefore not possible to give an overall judgement about provision in the subject. Teachers' plans and pupils' work in geography were analysed and showed that pupils study a range of geographical topics during their time at the school. Evidence shows that, through their work, pupils develop their geographical skills successfully by using atlases, maps, information texts and videos. These resources are used by pupils to gain information about themes such as recycling, and to help them draw comparisons between locations such as London and Chembakolli in India. Visits and visitors are also well used to enhance topics being studied. For example, pupils visit a local recycling centre and parents are often used to share information about the countries where they were born. However, written work does not always reflect the breadth of work studied and at times varies within a year group.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Good resources and use of visits enhance the quality of pupils' learning.
- Not enough work is recorded in pupils' books to help them practise and develop their literacy skills and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of history.

Commentary

107. All elements of the history curriculum are covered well and pupils make good progress, leaving in Year Six with standards broadly in line with national expectations. This reflects good achievement by pupils, considering they began school at levels well below those expected for their age.

108. The quality of teaching is good and, as a result, pupils develop an interest and enthusiasm for history. Well organised support by teaching assistants helps those pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language take a full part in lessons and achieve well. Good questioning by teachers ensures that pupils have an understanding of key vocabulary. Teachers often provide good opportunities for pupils to use new vocabulary in discussion and this also supports bilingual learners. While opportunities for speaking and listening are good, pupils are not always encouraged to write about their studies, enabling them to practise and develop their literacy skills.

109. The use of artefacts, visits and visitors remains a strength of the school as it was at the previous inspection. The school has a wide variety of historical artefacts that are effectively used to enrich different topics. Visits to places such as the Museum of London to study the Romans, and visitors to the school also support pupils' understanding of different periods in history.

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Appropriate areas for development have been identified by the new co-ordinator, including more use of ICT within the subject.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers sensitively encourage pupils to share their own religious beliefs with others and this helps to develop high levels of mutual respect and understanding.
- There are some very interesting and useful resources that help to illustrate elements of the subject successfully to pupils.
- There is not enough recorded work in pupils' books.
- Development of the subject is not planned well and some areas identified in the past as needing attention, have not been addressed.

Commentary

111. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus in both Years 2 and 6. This reflects the findings of the school's previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but little has been done to improve provision in a systematic way. By Year 6, pupils can talk confidently about a range of religious beliefs. They show good understanding about the importance of prayer, and are happy to discuss their own approaches to prayer within their individual religious faiths.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons seen during the inspection were good but the work in pupils' books shows a range of quality and coverage. In some classes, for example, in Year 5, the tasks set show good levels of challenge, as pupils consider the meanings of symbolism. In Year 6, however, little work is recorded in pupils' books. Opportunities are missed for pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills and respond in an individual, more personal way.

113. Teachers often show good knowledge of the subject and this helps them to put lessons over in an interesting and stimulating manner. This was seen in lessons in Year 3 and 4, where teachers' enthusiasm and confidence made the subject come alive for the pupils. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to exchange ideas on the subject and develop their vocabulary. This helps all the pupils, but especially those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Resources, including religious artefacts, are often used to stimulate pupils' curiosity. Original Indonesian puppets for example, are used to help Year 3 pupils understand Hindu stories.

114. Pupils' own enthusiasm and positive attitudes to the subject contribute greatly to their achievement. Pupils are keen to share their ideas within a calm and very supportive atmosphere.

115. No judgement was able to be made on the quality of leadership and management due to the absence of the co-ordinator, but plans and documentation were scrutinised. These showed little monitoring of coverage across year groups. Further improvement of the subject is not planned in a systematic and rigorous way. Aspects highlighted for development in the past have not been addressed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

116. No direct teaching of **design and technology** was observed during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement about provision. However, the subject was effectively combined with art in two lessons observed. In addition, teachers' plans were scrutinised and discussions held with pupils about their work. Pupils clearly develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject successfully as they move through the school. They learn to design and make products and can evaluate the outcomes, suggesting ways in which they might improve their designs.

117. In **music** a number of visiting teachers provide expert tuition in playing instruments, including the recorder and trumpet. Gifted and talented pupils play recorders and trumpets to an extremely high standard. No whole class music lessons were taught during the inspection, which prevents a judgement being made on the overall quality of the provision.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed well.
- Currently, standards are above average in Year 6 and well above average in Year 2.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which means they are able to put over their lessons confidently to pupils.
- The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' experiences in the subject.
- The policy for art and design is out of date.

Commentary

118. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were attaining higher standards than those found in most schools and this is still the case. Pupils in Year 2 show very good skills in observational drawing for example. They use their imagination well to paint scenes from 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. In Year 6, standards are not as high, but they remain above the levels expected for their age. Charcoal and pencil drawings, painting, collage and a range of three-dimensional work reflect the school's commitment to developing pupils' creative talents.

119. Art is used effectively in some other subjects. For example, children in Year 3 combined music and art in imaginative representations of 'The Carnival of the Animals' by Saint-Saens. However, little use of ICT is made to support the subject. The quality of teaching is good, mainly because of teachers' confidence and good personal knowledge and skills. They are able to teach individual skills clearly so that the pupils learn correct techniques.

120. The school makes use of a large number of visits and visitors to enrich the art curriculum. This has a significant impact on standards and achievement. For example, links with the Kings Cross project enabled children in Year 6 to produce some effective work on structures. Special provision is made for children identified as artistically talented, to further develop their skills.

121. Leadership of the subject is good and leads to art enjoying a high profile in the school. The policy for the subject, however, is out of date and does not provide clear guidance to new staff about the school's expectations for the subject.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra curricular provision contributes very well to pupils' achievements.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- There is no provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to learn to swim.

Commentary

122. There are many good opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of sporting activities outside the school day. These include football, cricket, dance, gymnastics, netball and rugby. Many of these activities are organised and led by teachers and this shows good levels of commitment to the pupils. The school takes part in many competitive tournaments and inter-school matches with a great deal of success. As a result of this additional provision, pupils are able to improve their skills and gain much enjoyment from active participation in sport. The annual school journey to Kent gives Year 6 pupils good opportunities to try out a range of outdoor and adventurous activities as well as contributing positively to their personal and social skills. Overall standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6.

123. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers manage their pupils well and this results in pupils working safely and with good concentration in even the most active lessons. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and try their hardest to succeed in the tasks set for them. Planning is thorough and teachers ensure that the work is at a suitable level for the capabilities of their pupils.

124. The pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 are able to learn to swim in the school's own learner pool. This is extremely useful as they learn to be confident in water from an early age. However, the pool is not large enough to be used by the older pupils and there is no provision for those in Years 3 to 6 to learn to swim to a higher standard. It also means that they, and any new arrivals to the school, do not have the opportunity to reach the nationally expected standard in swimming by the time they leave. The school is aware of this and is presently seeking to reach a solution by using the local swimming baths for lessons.

125. The subject is led and managed effectively. A wide range of coaches and organisations work with the pupils on various aspects of physical education. Teachers are given a lot of useful support and additional training to help improve their teaching skills and make their pupils learn more effectively. However, the school has been slow to address the lack of swimming provision between Years 3 and 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

126. Provision in personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Much is covered through assemblies, the religious education programme and science lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills when they attend the residential journey and other school visits.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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