

INSPECTION REPORT

**CONVENT OF JESUS AND MARY RC
INFANT SCHOOL**

Willesden Green

LEA area: London Borough of Brent

Unique reference number: 101544

Headteacher: Mrs Teresa O'Higgins

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 1 December 2004

Inspection number: 2066661

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	302
School address:	21 Park Avenue Willesden Green London
Postcode:	NW2 5AN
Telephone number:	0208 459 5890
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Maria Lourdes Fernandes
Date of previous inspection:	September 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided Roman Catholic nursery and infant school is located in Willesden Green and falls within the Westminster Diocese. The school is bigger than other primary schools, with 302 boys and girls on roll, aged 3 to 7. Thirty-three children attend the nursery part time and there are 90 children in reception classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average; however, pupils come from areas that are ethnically very diverse, including some where social deprivation is greater than that found nationally. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest group is white Irish although several Irish families have moved out of the area since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is high and half these are at early stages in acquiring English. The main first languages for these pupils are Polish, Portuguese, Yoruba and Twi. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' special needs are mostly moderate, with a minority who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties or physical difficulties. Attainment on entry to the nursery is slightly below average; when pupils entered Year 1 in 2004, their attainment was average.

The school is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools, and it provides a Family Learning Programme through Brent Adult Community Education Service. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced some difficulties in recruiting staff. This has recently acted as a barrier to raising standards in the reception year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above the national average by the time they leave. Teaching and learning are good. The school has a very positive ethos and provides very well for pupils' personal development. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has high expectations and has worked relentlessly to improve the school. It gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are that:

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, and achievement is good in English, science, information and communication technology and in the nursery.
- Although teaching in reception classes is satisfactory, it is not as good as it is in the rest of the school and the curriculum in the reception year lacks coherence.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning reflect a high level of care and very effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very supportive and involved in the life of the school, and the school has very good links with the community and other educational establishments.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but assessment information is not always used as well as it could be, assessment is undeveloped in non-core subjects and teachers' marking is variable.
- Aspects of target setting for pupils with special educational needs require improvement.

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected, in September 2002. Improvement in the areas identified as issues for action at that time has been very good. Parents are now much more involved in a partnership with the school, and weaknesses in information and communication technology have been resolved. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged in most lessons. Weaknesses in the school's attention to health and safety matters have all been remedied. Standards have risen and the leadership provided by the headteacher and the governing body is now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	C	C	B	A
Writing	C	C	B	A
Mathematics	D	A	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those where the same proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactorily in the other areas of learning. They make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1, they are likely to reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good, with very good achievement in mathematics. In 2004, results in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 were well above the national average in mathematics, and above average in reading and writing. The results of teacher assessments were average in science. The school's performance was well above that of similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics and above similar schools in science. Currently, standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English. They are in line with expectations in science and information and communication technology.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attitudes are very good and behaviour is good. The rate of attendance has improved and is now satisfactory, as is punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and in the nursery, and satisfactory in the reception year. The school is working to improve the quality of education in the Foundation Stage¹, but teachers in reception classes are new to working with this age group. The curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences, enriched by very good opportunities for learning outside lesson times. Pupils are cared for very well. Partnership with parents is very good and they are now closely involved in the life and work of the school. Links with other educational establishments and with the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has worked systematically to raise standards and improve the quality of education since the last inspection. The acting deputy head has begun to provide very good support to the headteacher and others in posts of responsibility fulfil their leadership roles well. The school is very effective in evaluating its own performance, in prioritising where development is needed and in taking necessary action. The governing body provides very good support to the school and challenges senior managers: governance is now very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are highly satisfied with the school. Pupils have very positive views and speak enthusiastically about the opportunities provided for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve teaching and the curriculum in the reception year.
- Develop assessment systems in the non-core subjects, use information from assessment consistently to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as possible, and that marking makes clear to pupils how to improve.
- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in setting and reviewing their individual education plan targets, and that these targets are specific and measurable.

¹ The Foundation Stage refers to the time children spend in the nursery and reception classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall: it is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the nursery; in reception classes, it is satisfactory but children's overall development is not promoted as well as it could be in the reception year.
- Achievement in mathematics is very good and standards are well above average.
- Pupils achieve well in English, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- Sometimes, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is good but in some lessons they do not achieve as much as they could.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily overall. The school has identified this as an area for development. Recent changes in staffing include temporary teachers in two of the reception classes and new teachers in the other reception class and in the nursery. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in the other areas of learning. Overall achievement is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception year. By the time they enter Year 1, children are likely to reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations and above average in personal, social and emotional development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.6 (14.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.4 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 77 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In 2004, results in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 were well above the national average in mathematics, above average in reading and writing and average in science. Results were well above those of similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics and above in science. Currently, standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English. They are in line with expectations in science and information and communication technology. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. In comparison with national differences in the performance of boys and girls, boys do rather better in this school than in most schools. Gifted and talented pupils make at least satisfactory progress and good progress in many lessons.
3. The trend in the school's test results for all subjects was above the national trend from 2000 to 2004, reflecting the good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Results show that trends in reading, writing and mathematics have been above the Brent family of schools over the last three years. The school performed satisfactorily against its challenging statutory targets in 2004.

4. The improvement in standards is a result of concerted efforts following the last inspection. The school has done a good deal of work in mathematics, which was a particular weakness at that time, including:

- Appointing a new mathematics co-ordinator.
- Training staff, including in the use of effective questioning and mental mathematics.
- Ensuring that planning is matched closely to pupils' prior attainment.
- Supporting pupils' learning skills through talking through problems and ensuring that they are clear about how to record their workings
- Regular mathematics homework linked to learning objectives.

As a result, there has been excellent improvement in standards in mathematics. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics in Year 2 were below average and indicated poor progress compared with similar schools. Standards are now well above average and achievement is very good.

5. Following the last inspection, the headteacher - who had been in post only three weeks at that point - identified the need to strengthen the school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Improvement in literacy standards has been the result of:

- staff training in literacy;
- improvements in planning;
- centrally located books;
- a workshop and information booklet for parents on supporting reading at home;
- a ten-week literacy course for parents through Brent Adult Community Education Service;
- the introduction of a home-school reading journal record;
- spending on guided reading resources;
- introducing regular handwriting practice in Years 1 and 2;
- the introduction of a special programme in Year 1 to support pupils' learning in literacy.

As a result, standards in reading and writing rose in 2004, showing good improvement on those at the time of the last inspection.

6. By the end of Year 2, most pupils for whom English is an additional language, but who are fluent in English, attain standards that are similar to those reached by their peers. This is because of the good support they receive throughout the school. Those who are new to English make good progress, but their standards remain lower than their English-speaking peers', as they have not yet acquired appropriate skills in the language. The school has identified that white European pupils - who are frequently of Polish heritage - are the lowest attaining group in the school. This is because many of these pupils join the school with little or no English. With good support from teachers and teaching assistants, these pupils make good progress and achieve well.

7. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Although targets in individual education plans are appropriate, they are not always clear and are mainly restricted to literacy or personal development. In most lessons, pupils' achievement is enhanced by good support provided by teaching assistants, particularly through the use of strategies to promote language development and resources. However, work planned by the teacher is not always matched to prior attainment so that pupils with special educational needs follow the same activities as other pupils, which limits their achievement.

8. The school is now working to raise standards further by closer analysis of the performance of pupils with English as an additional language and by sharpening its identification of gifted and talented pupils to pinpoint any possible underachievement. A bilingual teaching assistant, who is a native Polish speaker, has been appointed to support Polish pupils, and a lunchtime club in basic skills is being introduced for new arrivals who are non-English speaking. Resources are

being improved and staff training provided to increase the challenge for gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and school. Pupils behaviour overall is good. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils behave very well in class, but some boisterous behaviour was observed in the playground.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered very well.

Commentary

9. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and say that they would recommend this school to others. It is a happy and welcoming place with a calm working atmosphere. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. In lessons, they listen and concentrate well and are enthusiastic. Pupils behave very well in lessons. In the playground, most play together well but some boisterous behaviour was observed during the inspection. The school is aware of this and many steps have already been taken to improve the situation by changing the staffing arrangements in the playground and introducing more activities for pupils. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying; however, pupils are confident that, should an incident occur, staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. There were no exclusions in the last year.
10. Pupils' personal skills are promoted constantly and successfully throughout their time in the school. The 'golden rules' and reward system are highly respected and valued by pupils. Praise is used well by staff to encourage and motivate pupils. As a result, pupils are friendly and outgoing and discuss their work enthusiastically with visitors. Those pupils given responsibilities around the school fulfil them with confidence and pride but do not have opportunities to develop this further through, for instance, a school council. Relationships are very good in the school and pupils treat each other with much kindness and respect. Staff work hard to build pupils' self-esteem, with very clear results.
11. Staff are very conscious of the importance of promoting spiritual development and promote it very well through the links with the parish, through extra-curricular activities and through assemblies. Spontaneous opportunities are used to encourage a sense of wonder in pupils. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and this is promoted particularly well through the very good arrangements for circle times and the provision of a voluntary 'circle club' at lunchtime. Very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially are provided throughout the school. Pupils are given many opportunities to work together and generally do so effectively. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now very good. Staff are very conscious of the need to broaden pupils' experiences and have done this very well through arranging visitors such as a rabbi to talk about the Jewish faith and a group of African drummers during the very successful 'Black History Month'.
12. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. Attendance figures were lower than usual over the last year because of high levels of illness and the effects of the newly established staggered-entry system for new pupils entering the Foundation Stage. However, this situation has now improved and figures for the current year, to date, indicate that the rate of attendance is now satisfactory. The importance of good attendance is appropriately stressed to parents, and pupils' individual attendance levels are monitored closely and followed up using the recently introduced computerised registration system.

13. The school has sustained the strengths found in the last inspection in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. It has made very good improvement in provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences, enriched by very good opportunities outside lesson times. Pupils are cared for very well. Partnership with parents is very good and they are now closely involved in the life and work of the school. Links with other educational establishments and with the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and in the nursery.
- The school is working to improve the quality of education in the Foundation Stage: teachers in reception classes are new to working with this age group.
- Teaching is very good in mathematics and good in English, science and information and communication technology.
- The teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good.
- Although pupils' attainment is regularly assessed, assessment information is not used as fully as it could be, marking is variable and assessment is undeveloped in non-core subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	12 (37.5%)	12 (37.5%)	8 (25%)	-	-	-

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.

14. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory. Good improvement has been made since that time and teaching and learning are now good. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. Three-quarters of the teaching was at least good and in half of these lessons, teaching was very good. Teaching is good in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in the reception classes. Teaching is very good in mathematics, good in English, science and information and communication technology.

15. In lessons where teaching is at least good, a number of features are consistently found. Teachers set clear learning objectives and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils' behaviour is managed well and pupils are encouraged to apply themselves and work hard. Relationships are consistently good. Teachers are good role models for spoken English and pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well. The use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning is developing with the recent installation of an information and communication technology suite. Questioning is used well to deepen pupils' thinking and pupils are given good opportunities to work collaboratively to extend their understanding. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are motivated to learn.

16. Teachers in the core subjects have a good understanding of pupils' prior attainment and match work closely to their learning needs in English and mathematics. In science, they do not always

use what they know about pupils' existing understanding to provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils: this helps to explain why attainment in science is lower than that in English and mathematics. In the reception year, teachers are not yet using assessment information sufficiently to match work to children's prior attainment. Throughout the school, expectations are high, especially in mathematics. Other features that distinguish teaching in mathematics from that in other subjects are the very good use of resources and the emphasis placed on mathematical language to support pupils' understanding of new concepts. In Years 1 and 2, regular homework is given in literacy and numeracy, and homework is sometimes set in other subjects. In the Foundation Stage, children take books home and parents are encouraged to support their children's progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

17. Staff work together closely, planning in year groups to ensure consistency of approach from class to class. They are reflective in their practice and eager to make improvements. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science, and are developing their skills in information and communication technology. Limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum underpins the relative weakness in teaching in the reception year, despite the best efforts of staff to reach an understanding of what is required.
18. Teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Teachers use good questioning, and explain key vocabulary well. They use body language, pictures, materials and other artefacts to explain the lesson content. Puppets are used to identify sounds and support pronunciation. As a result, pupils complete their work successfully and achieve well. The use of the interactive whiteboard in the computer suite is very effective in explaining and demonstrating. The strong visual content helps pupils to understand what they are required to learn. Teachers' positive acceptance of a diversity of languages in their classes adds significantly to the confidence of bilingual pupils and, as a result, they are confident and proud of their command of more than one language. Teachers frequently write labels and captions in pupils' home languages. They greet pupils in different languages and the teaching of French through a lunchtime club gives a strong message that other languages are accepted and important.
19. Pupils learning English and who have special educational needs are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to make similar progress to their peers. The specialist teacher and support assistant for pupils acquiring English as an additional language work closely with class teachers and help pupils within lessons. Teaching assistants generally provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly for language and literacy.
20. At the time of the last inspection, assessment was unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2; it is now satisfactory, and developing assessment and marking are school improvement plan priorities this year. Each pupil in Years 1 and 2 is formally assessed in reading, writing, mathematics and science once each term and allocated a National Curriculum level. Samples of work are filed as evidence and annotated. The progress of each pupil is discussed and tracked by the headteacher and assessment co-ordinator on a termly basis. Effective procedures are in place for assessing pupils' work in the core subjects and this information is used to track pupils' progress. Many teachers check pupils' understanding as the lesson proceeds and use this information effectively to inform the support and guidance they provide. In most instances, assessment information is used well also in planning but there is scope for assessment information to be used more effectively in tracking the progress of individual pupils and in fine-tuning the setting of targets. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information from individual education plans or statements to match work to individual needs, which at times limits the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The school makes good use of 'P levels' in recording the small steps in some pupils' progress. All pupils for whom English is an additional language are assessed and their stages of language acquisition are determined and recorded. With the exception of physical education, where a new assessment system has been introduced recently, there are no procedures for assessing and recording standards in the non-core subjects. Co-ordinators are to visit other schools to investigate best practice in this area.

Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and some make clear what pupils need to do to improve, but marking of this quality is not found consistently across the school.

The curriculum

A good curriculum provides a wide range of experiences, and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of enrichment activities within and outside the school day is very good.
- All pupils, including those with special learning needs or who have been identified as gifted and talented, are fully included in school life and have equality of access to the curriculum.
- Good provision is made for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- The school has a very well structured programme for personal, social and health education.
- This school is at quite an early stage in making its curriculum creative and in forging links between subjects.
- Learning opportunities in design and technology are adversely affected in some classes by teachers' lack of subject knowledge.
- The accommodation provides a secure learning environment and has been much improved - but it still has some shortcomings, especially in the outdoor space and facilities.

Commentary

21. The quality of the curriculum is good and appropriately matched to pupils' ages, abilities and aptitudes. It meets statutory requirements and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively. Subjects all have policies and schemes of work based on the latest national guidance. The curriculum promotes equal opportunities for all well. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.
22. There are very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning through a wide range of visits and visitors. These have included a rabbi, a street cleaner, the local Member of Parliament, an African drumming group and representatives from the Cricklewood Homeless Centre. There is close involvement with the local library, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit weekly. The curriculum is also extended through the annual sports day, World Book Day and a Mathematics Week in the summer term. There are very good links with the Tricycle Theatre and the school has had an artist-in-residence. There has been good improvement in the range of lunchtime and after-school clubs provided. These include after-school clubs in drama, football and art, and lunchtime clubs in 'circle time', eco-buddies and French. The school is aware of the need to fine-tune the allocation of places to clubs: their popularity means that currently they are oversubscribed. Senior managers are also aware that lunchtimes are unduly long and the school is considering how best to reorganise pupils' break times. The recently appointed playground co-ordinator has worked hard to improve lunchtime provision for pupils, including the use of special zones in the playground for pupils to use the play equipment.
23. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to enable access for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are mostly appropriate but not always clear, and pupils are not involved in target setting and review in the way that they should be. The school makes effective use of dedicated support staff so that these pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in lessons. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are appropriately recognised and are challenged in most, but not all, lessons. The extension of higher attaining pupils in science is an area for development.
24. Pupils who speak English as an additional language access the curriculum well and take full part in all school activities. There are some notices, signs and books in other languages to show that the school values other cultures and languages. The school provides a curriculum that reflects other cultures positively. This adds to the confidence and self-esteem of ethnic minority pupils

and is supported through assemblies, celebration of Black History Month, geography, music and art. As a result, pupils of all ethnic backgrounds work and play very well together.

25. There is a very well devised programme for personal, social and health education. This is linked to aspects of the science curriculum and uses 'circle time' for discussing aspects of drugs awareness in addition to dedicated lessons on personal, social and health education. The school is involved in a 'Healthy Schools' scheme in conjunction with the local education authority.
26. The school is at quite an early stage in making its curriculum creative and in forging links between subjects. This has been identified as a priority for the future and some headway has been made through a project led by the Tricycle Theatre that spanned a number of subjects. Approaching the curriculum in more creative ways, to increase pupils' enjoyment, is a topic of discussion amongst senior managers and is also a very necessary development in the reception year. Relative weaknesses in the Foundation Stage curriculum stem from an approach that is too traditional for children in the reception year and from curriculum planning that does not seek to make learning sufficiently exciting or coherent.
27. The school has satisfactory staffing provision. There has been a significant staff turnover since the last inspection and the school has struggled with recruitment. Six teachers left and three were appointed during the last two years. Three vacancies are filled by temporary teachers and four new teachers joined the school at the beginning of the autumn term. The school was without a deputy head from January to August of this year. An acting deputy head was appointed, from within the school, in September. Although teaching assistants often provide good support, five teaching assistants are shared between the classes. The need to employ more support staff to deliver workforce reforms is clearly an issue that requires careful attention.
28. The school is situated in peaceful grounds, providing an oasis of calm. Parents and pupils spend time at the grotto at end of the day. A garden adjacent to the main playground has been developed recently by the Friends' Association and is used by children in reception classes and for science. A significant amount of work has been done to make the playground more stimulating but pupils have limited outdoor space in which to play. The development of the outdoor area used by the nursery continues to be a priority and the school has for some time been involved in an initiative through the local education authority to improve this area. The school has been refurbished recently, including the development of a new information and communication suite, secured entrances, administrative offices, reception classrooms and a library. The school has three floors and many stairs, which restricts disabled access.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides very good personal support and guidance and generally good academic support. The school pays satisfactory attention to pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very caring place.
- Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are very good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Good systems are in place for the induction of new pupils.
- Staff listen to pupils' views but do not take their ideas into account as much as they could in school development.

Commentary

29. Staff have a caring approach and look after pupils very well. This ensures pupils' welfare and general well-being and is much appreciated by parents. The school has a happy atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. They know that they should see the welfare officer if they are hurt or feeling unwell and value the care they receive from all the staff. The headteacher is the

person designated to deal with any child protection concerns. She has ensured that very thorough procedures are now in place for dealing with child protection issues and that staff are trained and aware of the necessary steps to follow should an issue arise. Comprehensive arrangements ensure the health and safety of all in the school, which is a considerable improvement on the situation at the last inspection. Health and safety procedures are implemented with very efficient support from the governors and caretaker, who ensure that all necessary risk assessments and safety checks take place.

30. Staff get to know pupils well personally and monitor their personal development closely as they progress through the school. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress and is working to improve the way pupils' attainment is tracked.
31. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and supportive. Entry into the school is managed well by staff in the Foundation Stage, although there are currently no visits to children's homes prior to entry. Children are given good opportunities to become familiar with the school before they arrive and, as a result, they settle quickly into school life.
32. Statutory requirements for the review of statements of special educational needs are met. Good support from teaching assistants ensures good care and welfare of pupils with special educational needs in lessons. The academic progress and personal development of these pupils are carefully monitored through the systematic review of individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those who belong to different ethnic backgrounds, are well cared for. Their progress is tracked and monitored against the targets set for raising standards, and they are an integral part of the school community.
33. Pupils are involved in the work of the school through the eco-buddy system and other initiatives. There is no school council, however, to provide pupils with a more formal opportunity to air their views. It is clear that pupils have distinct ideas about the school and would be perfectly capable of making a valuable contribution to school development, but are not being given an opportunity to do so at present.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is very good, and parents are very happy with the care and education the school provides. Links with the local community and with other educational establishments are also very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the school and are involved in its life and work.
- Very good information is provided for parents.
- The Friends' Association has been established since the last inspection and is already making a very good contribution to the school.
- There are very good links with the local community, especially with the parish.
- The school has very close links with its receiving school and good links with other educational establishments.

Commentary

34. Parents are highly satisfied with the education and care that their children receive. The school's links with parents were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection because it was not involving parents enough in its work. Since then, staff have worked very hard to forge a strong partnership with parents.
35. Parents receive valuable information on general matters through regular newsletters and increasing personal contact with staff. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are clearly written and meet all the legal requirements for their content. Booklets written for parents

with children starting in Foundation Stage classes are particularly well presented and useful. Termly consultation meetings are supported well and appreciated by parents. Annual reports, which are issued in the summer term, provide detailed information on the work that pupils have covered, the progress they have made and suggestions of ways that they could improve. Effective arrangements for homework enable parents to support their children's learning at home.

36. The school makes every effort to involve the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language in all school activities. All parents are given a welcome pack in their home language to familiarise them with school rules and routines. Those staff members who are bilingual support parents with translations and interpreting. Parents who are able to speak more than one language also help with interpreting. A literacy project set up by the school has provided useful additional support for parents, including some for whom English is an additional language.
37. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities for involvement in the review and setting of individual education plan targets and the annual review of statements, and receive good reports on the progress their child is making. Good links have been established with external agencies.
38. Parents are very supportive of the school and its work and the school values their contribution. A significant group of parents regularly help in classrooms and with after-school clubs. The Friends' Association was established two years ago and now plays a very important role in the school. Regular fund-raising and social events, such as the very popular activity afternoons at Christmas and Easter, are organised by the hardworking committee and supported well by all parents. This provides the school with extra funding and valuable additional resources. Practical help has also been provided, for instance, with improvements to the playground and recent development of the information and communication technology suite. Furthermore, Friends' Association committee members arrange fund-raising for local and international charities and provide weekly coffee mornings for parents to air their views about the school. Staff listen carefully to parents' opinions and concerns, and actively seek their views in an informal way. The school has, rightly, identified the need to introduce more formal consultation with parents through annual questionnaires.
39. The school has established very good links with the local community. Very good relationships continue to exist with the local parish, including frequent visits from the parish priest and to the church. A good arts link has now been established with a local theatre, which provided an artist-in-residence to work with pupils on the very successful 'mini-beast' project. Local shops and businesses are very supportive of the school's fund-raising efforts and good use is made of the local area for visits.
40. Very good links have been established with other schools in the area, in particular the junior school to which most pupils transfer. Curriculum links are strong and developing. A teacher from the junior school is working currently in the school's new information and communication technology suite to support teachers and help to develop the subject. Staff from the two schools liaise very closely to ensure that transition from one phase to the next is successfully handled. The school has formed valuable links with higher and further educational establishments, from which students come to undergo part of their training and on work experience placements, and is using these links to help in recruiting teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and ensures that the school is managed very effectively. Most other staff with key responsibilities fulfil their roles well. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and very effective management have taken the school forward significantly since the last inspection.
- The school is very effective in evaluating its own performance, in prioritising where development is needed and in taking necessary action.
- The governing body has developed significantly since the last inspection and now provides very good support and challenge.

Commentary

41. At the time of the last inspection, there were serious weaknesses in leadership and management. The school's evaluation of its own performance was judged to be unsatisfactory and the governing body was described as ineffective. There has been very good improvement in the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors since that time.
42. The headteacher is dynamic in her approach and continuously pushes to raise standards and improve provision. She has worked systematically since the last inspection, driven by her own high expectations and careful attention to detail. Her push to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching has been underpinned by a thorough system of monitoring, including lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning. As a result, weaknesses have been picked up quickly, and the headteacher has worked in collaboration with the local education authority to remedy weaknesses. For instance, the school is working closely with an early years consultant to improve provision in the reception year, an area of relative weakness at present.
43. The acting deputy head has begun to provide very good support to the headteacher and is a very good role model in her teaching for other staff. The headteacher has established a broad-based senior leadership team recently so that she now has senior staff to work alongside her in moving the school forward. This team consists of members of staff who hold other key positions and who are committed to school improvement. Training for the senior leadership team has begun through the Primary Leadership Strategy². Appointing a substantive deputy head is a school priority and governors intend to make an appointment next term.
44. Opportunities for professional development are good and there is now a strong sense of teamwork, with staff working as part of a cohesive team. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive and focused document that incorporates subject development plans and shows that raising standards is central to the school's ongoing agenda. Most teachers in middle management posts fulfil their roles effectively. Alongside developments in the senior team, these teachers are being empowered to develop their leadership and monitoring skills. Subject co-ordination is very good in mathematics and good in English and science. Very clear direction is being provided in information and communication technology by an experienced teacher seconded part time from another school. The new Foundation Stage co-ordinator is providing good leadership and satisfactory management: teachers in reception classes would benefit from more day-to-day monitoring of their work to support their development.
45. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language are good. The school has appointed a part-time teacher who provides additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and speak English as an additional language. One full time bilingual teaching assistant provides additional support and the English co-ordinator co-ordinates the service. The new special educational needs co-ordinator, appointed at the beginning of this term, has made a good start and currently provides satisfactory leadership and management. She has already carried out an audit of provision, provided training for staff and begun to meet regularly with support staff. She is working to strengthen links with outside agencies. The school makes good use of that part of its funding that is earmarked for supporting specific groups of pupils.

² This is an initiative aimed at improving the quality of leadership skills for senior managers in those schools involved.

46. The governing body is very committed to and involved in the life and work of the school. Governors have supported the school closely since the last inspection. A strong partnership exists between the headteacher and the chair of governors, which includes open discussions about the school's performance. Governors attended training following the last inspection and the governing body is now involved in shaping the direction of the school. Link governors are in place for religious education, literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, information and communication technology and health and safety. Governors meet co-ordinators regularly and observe lessons. The governing body now provides very good support to the school and challenge to the senior managers. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously.
47. A high staff turnover since the last inspection has led to a reduction in teaching costs, since there are now more young – and, thus, less expensive - staff than there were. Funding saved as a result of this, and shown as a substantial carry forward into the current financial year in the table below, has been used wisely to provide a new information and communication technology suite and other necessary improvements to the school building.
48. Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the time they leave. Teaching and learning are good and pupils' personal development is promoted very well. A good quality of education is provided at a below average cost. The school therefore gives very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	851,658.55
Total expenditure	777,987.05
Expenditure per pupil	2,576.12

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,000
Balance carried forward to the next	103,671.50

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was good in the Foundation Stage. Since then, there has been a complete change in staffing and, although the school has worked closely with the local education authority to improve provision, teaching is now satisfactory overall. Children's achievement is good in personal, social and emotional development and they are likely to exceed the expected standard in this area by the end of the reception year. Achievement is satisfactory in all other areas of learning, where the majority of children are likely to reach the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1.
50. In the nursery, teaching is good in all areas of learning and children are given an appropriate range of learning experiences. This means that their progress is good and they make up for their slightly below average attainment on entry. The classroom and the small rooms off the main area provide a stimulating learning environment. There is a good balance between structured activities and free choice. Opportunities for children to extend their learning in the outdoor area are developing and are, rightly, a continued priority for the school.
51. In the three reception classes, teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum is being developed. Teachers in these classes all joined the school at the beginning of this term and lack knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator, who teaches in the nursery, is also new but has begun to provide good leadership - for instance, through advising and training other staff. Management is satisfactory: more day-to-day monitoring of practice in the reception classes is needed to help teachers pinpoint how they might improve. Teachers in reception have received a great deal of support and guidance from an early years consultant, which has led to significant improvement. However, reception staff still lack understanding of what constitutes good Foundation Stage practice.
52. Limited understanding is evident particularly in the planning in reception, which focuses on a series of formal tasks more suited to older children and does not promote holistic experiences that span a number of areas simultaneously. Some of the tasks, especially in literacy and numeracy sessions, are mundane and offer limited learning opportunities. There is a particular lack of opportunity for children to become enthused, develop their ideas in depth and solve problems for themselves, based on their own interests. As a result, teaching in reception is less motivating for children than it is in the nursery.
53. The acquisition of key skills is carefully assessed and recorded. The practice of observing children is established in the nursery and is developing satisfactorily in reception classes. Teachers respond positively to children's work and provide them with guidance on how to improve, but assessment information and the 'stepping stones' in the Foundation Stage curriculum are not used as well as they should be in the reception classes to identify the next stage in learning for individual children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong partnership with parents and mostly good relationships with the staff mean that children feel secure.
- Behaviour is generally good and, when teaching is good, children show a real interest in learning.
- Opportunities for Foundation Stage children to take part in whole-school activities promote their learning very well.

Commentary

54. Children achieve well in this area of learning and are likely to exceed national expectations by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and children benefit considerably from the school's very positive ethos when they take part in whole-school activities.
55. Very good partnership with parents and staggered induction into the nursery support children's personal development and ensure that they settle in easily and quickly develop confidence. Children build well on their previous learning and experiences, and those learning English as an additional language are socially included. Children from all ethnic groups play happily together. They develop tolerance towards others and learn to co-operate, at times taking the opportunity to help one another. Children persist with activities and try to succeed at whatever task they are given. When teaching is good or tasks are stimulating, they apply themselves very well and are eager to learn.
56. Staff are consistent in giving children clear messages about the importance of applying themselves and behaving well. As a result, behaviour is usually good and children make good progress in learning classroom routines. Occasionally in the nursery, children's behaviour is inappropriate when they are not directly supervised at the side of the building in the outdoor area. At times in reception, children lose interest and become restless when they are forced to sit on the carpet for too long and when learning is generally too serious and lacking in fun. Children are usually productive when they move off to work in small groups or are given freedom of choice.
57. Social development through play is promoted well, within activities indoors and outside. A few children play alone, but most enjoy playing together, sometimes discussing what they are doing. Relationships between adults and children are generally good, giving children the support they need. Staff in the reception classes vary in the level of sensitivity they show towards individual children and the speed with which they realise a child needs help or could cope with greater challenge. Children are encouraged to be independent as far as they can in exercising choice and being responsible for tidying. They are taught good manners at snack and meal times, and benefit considerably in their personal and emotional development from involvement in whole-school activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication and language skills are promoted well in the nursery.
- In literacy sessions, children in reception all experience the same basic activities in a cycle throughout the week, regardless of their existing knowledge and skills.

Commentary

58. Children's achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning. About two-thirds of the children in reception are working broadly in line with national expectations at this stage in the year; the remainder are below average in developing their writing skills and in linking letters to sounds.
59. Good interaction and questioning by staff in the nursery support language development and are especially helpful to children whose home language is not English. In reception, children are encouraged to talk about their own experiences, to listen as a whole class and to take turns in contributing their ideas. At times, teachers inexperienced with this age group have difficulty getting and keeping children's attention when they are seated on the carpet for literacy sessions. When they work in small groups with adults, children generally have good opportunities to

develop their communication and language, and talk confidently about what they are doing. There are some missed opportunities to promote spoken language in literacy sessions, because limited use is made of props to support and enliven learning, but teachers make good use of pictures and symbols to help children understand daily routines. The provision of a bilingual support assistant, who is a native Polish speaker, is a positive move. Teachers in reception show limited skill in supporting the language development of children who are at early stages in learning English.

60. Teaching about letters and sounds is satisfactory. There is a wide range of attainment in letter recognition, and in linking letters with sounds. Higher attaining children are grasping this well but a significant number of children have a lot of ground to cover if they are to reach the expected standard by the end of reception. The school has, rightly, identified this as a priority for development and teachers' practice varies widely from good to barely satisfactory. All children show interest in books and some can recognise a few words without prompting. A minority of children say some of the words with the teacher when a familiar story is read to them. Children regularly take books home and parents are encouraged to take an active part in supporting their children's literacy development. Children can predict what might happen in a story and handle books carefully. They enjoy listening to taped stories and sustain their interest well.
61. Children are making satisfactory progress in developing early writing skills but, again, there is a wide range of attainment – from children in reception who cannot yet draw circles or lines to higher attaining children who are able to copy words, forming their letters quite accurately and beginning to write a few words independently. Many children cannot yet write their names but all show an understanding that print carries meaning. They use mark making to communicate and can say what is happening in their drawings. Children have some opportunities to write for a purpose, for instance writing party invitations, but they would benefit from more encouragement to write independently as part of role-play.
62. Tasks offer sufficient challenge to keep most children working satisfactorily. In reception classes, some tasks given to small groups of children provide limited learning opportunities, and the approach taken is sometimes too formal for this age group. This is because when literacy is taught in discrete sessions teachers do not make imaginative use of resources or a wide enough range of methods to motivate children. Learning support staff provide good support on some occasions, and consistently so in the nursery. Teachers in reception classes do not always provide enough direction to teaching assistants. Support staff frequently spend too much time with one group of children instead of dividing their time in a lesson between different groups. The organisation means that children are often expected to sustain their interest in activities which offer limited stimulation or scope for self-expression for too long in reception classes. Assessment information is recorded appropriately but information about the prior attainment of individual children is not being used sufficiently in planning. As a result, all children are given the same basic experiences each week, rather than taking part in activities that build, step by step, on what they already know.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in learning to count and in beginning to develop other mathematical skills.
- In numeracy sessions, assessment information is not used sufficiently to match work to children's prior attainment.

Commentary

63. Children's achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning and they are working broadly in line with national expectations at this stage in the year.
64. In the nursery, children make good progress in the basic skills of counting, and grouping and matching objects. These skills are developed satisfactorily in reception classes, for instance through learning the concept of 'one more than' and how to sequence a series of events. Most children can recognise numbers up to ten and some can count far beyond that. Their attainment varies widely in their ability to order numbers. Children begin to learn about quantities and measuring, and most can recognise simple geometric shapes. Sometimes, teachers use good questioning skills to promote mathematical thinking, for instance, saying, "You've given me a birthday cake for a four-year-old with four candles. I wanted a cake for a six-year-old. How many candles do we need?"
65. Higher attaining children are making generally better progress than others in this area of learning and are able, for instance, to find all the sets of numbers that make up ten. At times, opportunities are missed to get higher attaining children to work with bigger numbers than the majority understand because assessment information is not used sufficiently in lesson planning. At other times, too much is expected of most children – as when everyone in a class was asked to find 'one more than' a given digit using number fans, which many found confusing and difficult in the time allowed. Records of work show that at times wholly inappropriate work has been set for lower attaining children.
66. Good focused teaching was seen in the nursery, when the teacher worked with individual children - challenging and encouraging them with very clear instructions. Teaching is satisfactory overall in reception classes. As in literacy, some tasks given to small groups of children in reception classes during numeracy sessions provide limited learning opportunities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school develops children's knowledge and curiosity about the world around them
- The newly created garden provides a valuable resource for learning about living things.

Commentary

67. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in the nursery, and children make sound progress in this area of learning. They are working in line with national expectations and are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.
68. Children learn about the seasons and have collected autumn leaves and found out about how the colours change. They explore the world through their senses, tasting foods and listening to the different sounds in the environment. In the nursery, the keeping of fish and a hamster supports children's learning about living things and all children have benefited from opportunities to dig, weed and plant bulbs in the garden.
69. Children have good opportunities to use computers and apply themselves well - for instance, to control the mouse and select options from the menu. Through playing in the sand and with water, they learn something about the properties of materials. They have opportunities to use bricks and construction toys, and children in the nursery have access to wood and plastic tools for playing at making things. Photographic evidence shows that an excellent water project was undertaken in the nursery last year.

70. Children learn about the wider world and, from their direct experience, they understand that people speak different languages. The practice of greeting children in different languages, seen in the nursery during the inspection, promotes this very well. Visits into the immediate locality, to the shops in Willesden Green, stimulate children's interest and extend their learning satisfactorily. Children would benefit, however, from opportunities to take part in visits further afield. Their involvement in whole-school initiatives - such as Black History Month and a performance by African drummers - supports their development very well. They learn about festivals, for instance through taking part in a Halloween hat competition, and celebrating a carnival in school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor play areas provide rather limited opportunities for children to extend their physical skills, but they are being encouraged to use an increasing range of resources when they go outside.

Commentary

71. Children achieve satisfactorily in physical development and are currently working broadly in line with national expectations. Teaching is satisfactory but the outside play areas remain rather limited, despite a good ongoing effort by the school and parents to improve this aspect of provision.

72. The outdoor areas provide broadly satisfactory learning experiences, although the school recognises the need to extend the opportunities provided for outdoor learning. Staff place some resources outside to promote children's all-round development but planning has not yet fully integrated use of the outside areas into the overall scheme of things. The children tend, at present, to opt for outside activities that promote their physical development and few use equipment aimed at other areas of learning.

73. Children display a satisfactory range of physical skills, including hopping, skipping, running and jumping. They pedal the large wheeled toys confidently and are increasing their control and spatial awareness. Physical challenge is fairly limited: resources do not, for instance, promote the development of higher order climbing and balancing skills. In the playground used by reception children, the small garden provides some additional physical opportunities - for instance, for digging.

74. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop hand-to-eye co-ordination through activities such as rolling dough, threading beads, doing puzzles and playing with sand. They gain increasing control of pens, pencils and brushes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers lack knowledge of best practice in this area.
- Children's involvement in whole-school events supports their creative development well.
- Role-play is encouraged but it is not developed richly to extend children's involvement.

Commentary

75. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning but children's creative development could be fostered more imaginatively. Achievement is broadly satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage, in a fairly narrow range of experiences. From evidence seen, it is not possible to reach a clear judgement about standards.
76. A satisfactory range of artistic experiences is provided. Children have access to paints and paper and some other materials - for instance, to use for collage. When they are given opportunities to paint freely, children become absorbed, carefully combining colours and applying paint. They regularly use malleable materials such as plasticine and play dough and have made models by joining cardboard boxes. There is no evidence of children deepening their understanding through working in exciting and imaginative contexts. Children's work on display, in two and three dimensions, is often unimaginative, showing that they have had limited materials from which to select and little opportunity to move beyond an outcome that is largely adult-directed.
77. In music, children enjoy learning new songs, although teachers in reception classes made less use of songs and rhymes to promote literacy and numeracy during the inspection than is usually found with this age group. Some children sing confidently in small groups; most join in with songs as a whole class. Children in the reception classes learn to listen carefully and distinguish different musical sounds, such as high and low, and to recognise the sounds made by different instruments. They know the names of some musical instruments and children in the nursery have free access to simple musical instruments. Enhancement for the arts also comes from musical events in the school as a whole and from visits by artists.
78. The promotion of children's imaginative development is satisfactory. Children have some opportunities to dress up, but with a fairly limited range of props, and staff do not develop this activity as well as they could. The school provides a home corner in each classroom, and a shop in the nursery playground stimulates children's social, linguistic and mathematical development. Resources to support role-play are adequate but not developed enough to help children elaborate their play and to foster sustained imaginative involvement in response to stories and first-hand experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed.
- Home-school links for literacy are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Marking does not support pupils' improvement sufficiently.

Commentary

79. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are in line with national expectations but many pupils are learning English as an additional language. Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, many are working above the nationally expected Level 2 in all aspects of English. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, results were above those in schools nationally and well above those of similar schools.

80. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and pupils make very good progress in this area. They contribute confidently in whole-class activities, and are able to justify their choices and explain their work. Teachers are good role models for spoken English: they speak clearly, and explain and repeat new vocabulary. Questioning is used effectively to support pupils in expressing their thinking, and pupils are encouraged to discuss in pairs and to evaluate one another's work.
81. Reading is taught well and pupils enjoy books. By Year 2, most pupils read with confidence and expression and are knowledgeable about fiction and non-fiction texts. Phonic skills are taught well. Workshops have been held for parents to enable them to support their children's learning at home. These and the home-school link book have been effective in supporting reading throughout the school. Teachers support the development of reading skills very well. The implementation of guided reading and the purchase of a wide range of quality books have improved provision since the last inspection. The library remains an area for development.
82. Pupils write confidently. They are given a range of opportunities for writing and are taught to structure their written work logically. They use interesting descriptive words in their writing and spell with a high degree of accuracy.
83. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well paced and pupils are motivated to learn. Good links are made with pupils' own experiences, such as playground activities and making a sandwich, so that tasks are meaningful. Tasks are matched appropriately to pupils' prior attainment and higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged.
84. Pupils' targets for reading and writing have been established recently and shared with pupils and parents. Termly assessments support the tracking of pupils' progress. Work is conscientiously marked but teachers do not indicate whether learning objectives have been met or what pupils need to do to improve. Sometimes, the concluding part of lessons is used for pupils to review and evaluate their work but this is not consistent practice.
85. Leadership and management are good. Since taking up the post, the subject co-ordinator has implemented the National Literacy Strategy, reorganised and purchased new reading resources, introduced guided reading and reviewed handwriting practices. Strategies for improvement are clearly set out in the school improvement plan, and monitoring of planning and scrutiny of work are undertaken regularly. Information related to policy and practice is shared with parents and with other staff and this has been instrumental in raising attainment for all pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school's latest test results were above average and there has been a clear improvement in leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection. There is, however, still work to be done to improve aspects of assessment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

86. Language and literacy skills are consistently used well in other subjects. Opportunities for such links inform planning. For example, in a Year 1 personal, social and health education and citizenship lesson, descriptive language was used to identify feelings a person might have when a letter is received. Report writing that involves sequencing events in history and geography is logged in pupils' literacy books. The promotion of literacy and language across subjects is exploited as a means of using time effectively and making connections in pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils learn very effectively as a result of very good teaching.

- Assessment information is used well for planning and to promote the learning of all groups of pupils.
- The curriculum is very well conceived.
- Leadership and management are very good and have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

87. Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were well above those of schools nationally and those of similar schools in 2004. Standards are currently well above average in Years 1 and 2, and there has been excellent improvement in test results since the last inspection.
88. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good in all areas of mathematics because pupils concentrate and apply themselves in response to very effective teaching. All teachers set high expectations for pupils' learning. They make very good use of well-thought-out resources and ensure that lessons are lively, so that pupils enjoy their learning, are well motivated and try very hard. The strong emphasis on the development of language enhances pupils' learning of new mathematical ideas and means that the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language deepen their understanding and enjoy equal access to learning alongside other pupils. Assessment is used well by teachers to accommodate the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers plan effectively to match the prior attainment of individual pupils, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
89. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a very good range of extra learning opportunities such as the excellent 2004 'mathematics week' held, for the first time, last term. Here, pupils extended their knowledge of using and applying mathematics in everyday situations. A very strong emphasis on problem solving and practical investigations ensures that mathematics is meaningful and promotes pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively. The use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning is not yet fully developed within the subject, although a good start has been made, particularly in the recording of data and the development of numeracy skills.
90. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management, which has resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the development of the curriculum and in teaching and learning through more effective monitoring and action planning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

91. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils use coordinates in geography to locate various positions on a map, and they use standard measures in science investigations and record their findings in tables and graphs. Pupils use timelines in history to put famous people and significant events into chronological order. In music, pupils count out beats to the bar and in physical education they increase their spatial awareness in travelling and in controlling the direction of a ball in team games.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, most pupils achieve well; at times, higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and manages the subject well.
- Visitors to school and clubs held after school enrich the curriculum very well.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to follow individual lines of enquiry.

- Assessment information is not used enough to track pupils' progress and set targets for further improvement.

Commentary

92. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were in line with those in schools nationally and above those of similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are also in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements in teaching and learning and in leadership and management and, as a result, pupils' achievement has also improved.
93. Pupils' investigative skills are developing well. Pupils in Year 1 investigate questions such as 'whether a plant would grow better in the dark or in the sunlight'. They are able to observe and predict, but they get insufficient opportunities to record results of their findings and draw conclusions. Most pupils achieve well, but the achievement of some higher attaining pupils is only satisfactory, because they do not consistently receive work that is challenging enough. In one lesson, pupils in Year 2 made good progress in understanding why a battery is needed to provide energy and a complete circuit to light a bulb. Higher attaining pupils completed the experiment quickly and there was little opportunity for extension work.
94. The achievement of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is similar to that of their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well in lessons and achieve well. Pupils who have special educational needs receive appropriate support from adults and their achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers set clear learning objectives and pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Pupils understand how each lesson links to previous work. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well across the school and their interest is maintained by careful questioning. Teachers explain scientific vocabulary very well, model language and ask pupils to repeat after them, and require pupils to use new terminology in their questions and answers. This ensures that all pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language and who have special educational needs, understand the task well. Resources are used effectively for investigative work, and teaching assistants provide good support.
96. A range of initiatives - including work as part of a project with an artist-in-residence, 'the waste control team', and the eco-buddies club - enrich the curriculum very well. Pupils have had very good opportunities to discuss environmental issues with a street cleaner and the local Member of Parliament.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The headteacher is co-ordinating the subject temporarily, pending a permanent appointment. She has a good understanding of the workings of the subject across the school through effective monitoring of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' books. This has led to appropriate priorities for improvement - for example, the development of the use of information and communication technology - and more emphasis on investigative and experimental science. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. All assessment information is analysed but it is not used enough to track individual pupils' progress to further improve standards. The co-ordinator has identified the need to use assessment information more rigorously and set learning targets for individual pupils to further improve standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations and are improving.
- The new computer suite is being used well to improve pupils' skills.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- The acting co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well.
- The school priority to develop the use of information and communication technology across subjects is appropriate.
- The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

98. Standards are in line with those expected nationally in Years 1 to 2 and they are rising as a result of recent improvements in teaching and in resources. Pupils achieve well in response to good teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, including pupils who are acquiring English, is good.

99. Since the last inspection, standards, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved from unsatisfactory to good. Pupils in Year 2 word-process competently and know how to combine text and graphics. They use the tools in paint programs well and produce effective pictures. The computer suite is used well and the computer-to-pupil ratio is favourable. Pupils have many opportunities to work in pairs and individually to pursue their own designs and work at their own pace.

100. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' previous learning and build on this effectively. The interactive whiteboard is used well in the computer suite to aid whole-class demonstrations. Teachers' careful questioning maintains pupils' interest and challenges them to think. Vocabulary is explained well and language is modelled for pupils to repeat and use in their answers. This supports all pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are used well to support learning. Teachers have high expectations and are secure in using computers and, as a result, guide pupils well. Pupils experience the expected range of opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills in word-processing, graphics, data handling, control and modelling.

101. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The part-time acting co-ordinator, seconded from a nearby junior school, is providing very good support to teachers. All teachers have had training in information and communication technology and those less confident are supported very well. The co-ordinator has modelled lessons to guide teachers, and he monitors teachers' planning, as well as teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but they have not been established long enough for assessment information to be used in future planning and in tracking progress. A portfolio of pupils' work provides effective guidance to teachers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

102. Pupils make satisfactory use of information and communication technology skills in literacy. They use their word-processing to write poems and stories, and they are learning to mix text and graphics. In an art and design lesson, pupils used the computer to design pictures in the style of a famous artist and many examples of computer art are on display around the school. However, the use and promotion of pupils' information and communication technology skills are not yet sufficiently in place in mathematics, science and other subjects. The school's identification of the need to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is appropriate.

HUMANITIES

103. The inspection of religious education was not part of the remit of this inspection.
104. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, pupils' achievement or teaching in **geography** and **history**, because limited evidence was gathered in both subjects.
105. Curriculum plans indicate that the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered appropriately. Geography and history are taught in alternate half-terms during Years 1 and 2. Evidence from displays, written work and discussions with pupils shows that standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards both subjects and talk knowledgeably about topics they had studied.
106. In history, two lessons were seen: teaching and learning were satisfactory in one lesson and good in the other. Where teaching was good, strong features included building on pupils' prior knowledge and using practical activities to reinforce understanding. Good support from teaching assistants supported learning for all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
107. The curriculum in geography and history is enhanced by first-hand experiences. In history, a trip to London for Year 2 pupils brought to life the reasons for the Great Fire of London. For Year 1 pupils, artefacts from a local museum and a visit from the curator increased their understanding of past times. The local environment supports geographical awareness in Year 1. In Year 2, a comparative study is undertaken with places further afield, such as Mexico and the Isle of Struay.
108. At present, temporary teachers are responsible for leading and managing geography and history until permanent appointments are made. The school is very aware of the need to enrich the curriculum in both subjects and to establish an assessment system.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

109. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make an overall judgement about provision, pupils' achievement or teaching in **art and design**. Two lessons were sampled, displays of work were scrutinised and the role of the co-ordinator was explored.
110. The support of a parent, who is an experienced art teacher, in leading a project with pupils in Year 2 and in work with the art club has given rise to some exciting, high quality work. This has enabled pupils in Year 2 to experience an in-depth practical project, in which they have combined images, developed their own drawings and design ideas and learned a range of practical techniques. Some attractive, experimental art has been produced using computer art packages, where work on display shows above average visual awareness and confirms that pupils are given good opportunities to experiment visually and technically. Other work on display indicates satisfactory learning opportunities.
111. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make an overall judgement about provision, pupils' achievement or teaching in **design and technology**. Limited evidence was available and sampling of teachers' planning revealed some confusion about what constitutes art and design and technology. This is clearly an area in which some staff require further subject training. The school follows national guidance in its curriculum, and a current project in Year 2 with a food technology emphasis provides appropriate opportunities for designing, making and evaluating.
112. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make an overall judgement about provision, pupils' achievement or teaching in **music**. Two lessons were sampled, music making was observed in assembly and the role of the co-ordinator was explored.

113. Pupils have good opportunities for singing, performing and listening to music. All pupils sing enthusiastically during assemblies. For example, in one assembly pupils listened carefully to a classical guitar composition and then sang a variety of songs and hymns, thoughtfully and with expression, to reflect preparation for Christmas through the celebration of Advent. In the two music lessons sampled, teaching was brisk and lively and kept pupils focused on their musical tasks. Pupils sang unfamiliar songs, concentrating hard on the lyrics, and had good opportunities to play simple percussion instruments. Pupils' learning is extended through enrichment activities such as African drumming and singing during the Easter performance.
114. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, pupils' achievement or teaching in **physical education** because limited evidence was gathered. Curriculum planning was scrutinised, the work of the co-ordinator was explored and part of one lesson was seen.
115. In the lesson sampled, pupils in Year 1 took part in music and movement to a taped programme. They listened well and followed instructions, moving confidently and imaginatively. The school's overview of curriculum planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met, and that pupils' learning is enriched effectively through the use of outside coaches to extend their skills in football and gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship are developed throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- They learn to care for their environment.
- They relate very well to one another and have a sense of belonging to the community.

Commentary

116. As a result of the very good provision for personal, social and health education, standards have improved since the last inspection. The strong Christian ethos of the school supports pupils very well in feeling positive about themselves and taking responsibility for their actions. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to discuss topical issues and to contribute to class and school life. 'Golden rules' of behaviour are displayed throughout the school and pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong.
117. The curriculum has been enriched since the last inspection. Through the eco-buddies project, pupils have developed an understanding of how to take responsibility as citizens for their environment by identifying what damages and improves the local area. Within the school community, the adoption of a tree by each class has developed a sense of responsibility for caring for the school grounds.
118. Pupils relate very well to one another, respecting the different cultures from which they each come. They work co-operatively and have a sense of belonging to their school and the Christian family. Links with the Cricklewood Centre at harvest and with the 'Shoebox Appeal' have further developed pupils' understanding of caring for one another and the wider community. Through these activities, they recognise the needs of others less fortunate than themselves.
119. Leadership and management are very good. The subject co-ordinator has established a rich curriculum and is beginning further to enrich the learning opportunities with the 'Grab 5' healthy schools initiative that provides a daily fresh fruit snack, encouraging a healthy choice. All staff support pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship with enthusiasm and commitment.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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