

INSPECTION REPORT

Ilderton Primary School

Varcoe Road, London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100795

Headteacher: Mrs Liz Hills

Lead inspector: Tony Painter

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th November 2004

Inspection number: 267096

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	346
School address:	Varcoe Road London
Postcode:	SE16 3LA
Telephone number:	020 7237 3980
Fax number:	020 7252 1541
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Mary Isles
Date of previous inspection:	19-Apr-1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large urban community primary school has higher than average proportions of pupils leaving and joining during the year. It takes significant numbers of pupils from refugee and traveller backgrounds. Around a third of the pupils are from white backgrounds, whilst others have a wide range of cultural origins, with the largest groups from African or Caribbean backgrounds. Over a quarter of pupils have home languages other than English with some at a very early stage of learning English. Most pupils live in the area around the school, which has many low socio-economic indicators. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 40.2 per cent, is above the national average. Children joining the school have well below average overall attainment for their age and many have restricted experiences. Currently, 116 pupils (32 per cent and well above the national average) have identified special educational needs. Eight pupils (2.2 per cent) have a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9163	Geoffrey Humphrey	Lay inspector	
32505	Michelle Coles	Team inspector	Special educational needs Religious education History Geography
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics
15023	Ali Haouas	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Music Physical education
32757	Tim Kuhles	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that provides good value for money. A very positive atmosphere for learning has been established that is having a beneficial impact on all pupils' achievements.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good relationships secure excellent commitment to support for all pupils and their families.
- Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well and is raising standards of attainment.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour support their learning although teachers do not do enough to encourage their greater independence.
- The headteacher's very strong vision and overview steers improvements well.
- Subject co-ordinators do not have a consistently clear view of their subjects.
- Pupils' good learning opportunities are enriched by a very good range of additional activities.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of the good assessment information to plan lessons.
- Although the school makes good efforts to improve pupils' attendance level, it is unsatisfactory.

Good progress since the last inspection has seen most issues raised in the last report successfully remedied and standards are rising. In particular, provision for subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT) has been substantially improved. Clear improvements in the consistency of good teaching are reflected in pupils' improving achievements. However, attendance remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	E	E	E
mathematics	C	E	D	D
science	C	E*	E	E

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

Pupils' achievements are **good** from well below average attainment on entering the school. Good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures they learn well with the other pupils. Pupils learning English as their second language settle quickly and many achieve very well. However, the school's test results are weakened by significant numbers of pupils who are new to speaking English and join the school close to the tests.

National Curriculum test results in Years 2 and 6 have been mostly well below average in recent years and comparisons with similar schools have been weak. The 2001 Year 6 results were in the bottom five per cent of the country. The 2002 pupils had uncharacteristically high attainment and substantial staff changes further weakened

provision but greater stability is now having a very positive impact. The trend of results is above the national trend and tracking information clearly shows how standards are rising.

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, but most are still well below the goals children are expected to reach by the time they start Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress, although their overall attainment is restricted by their very limited skills. In Years 3 to 6, good progress continues and rising standards are seen more clearly. Current Year 6 pupils are below average in English and science, although standards in mathematics approach those found nationally. These standards compare well with those found in similar schools. Younger pupils show similarly strong achievement, suggesting a further trend of improvement.

The school ensures pupils' **very good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very high behaviour expectations are leading to improvements in all aspects of pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their very good interest in all school activities is helping them learn. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities to help pupils to develop greater independence. Attendance is unsatisfactory, despite the school's good efforts.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Good education with **good** teaching and learning ensures that pupils of all backgrounds get a wide range of experiences, enriched by very good activities outside lessons. Teachers engage pupils' attention with very good relationships and high behaviour expectations. They motivate pupils to learn well with good explanations and use of resources. They use their very good knowledge of pupils to match work to suit pupils of different backgrounds and abilities. However, they do not make enough use of the school's good assessment systems to ensure the best possible progress. Good links with parents and the local community support pupils' learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**.

The headteacher's very good leadership has ensured a clearly shared understanding of how the school needs to improve. She has successfully established good teamwork, although co-ordinators do not all have good understanding of standards and teaching in their subjects.

Good management focuses developments on raising standards. Good self-evaluation identifies appropriate developments that are supported by good financial planning and professional development for staff.

Supportive governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have good views of the school, particularly teachers' high expectations of pupils to achieve well. Pupils are very positive about the strong relationships and the very wide range of activities on offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend and improve the co-ordinators' role.
- Make more use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' abilities when planning lessons.
- Give pupils greater opportunities to develop independence.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' standards are **below average** by the time they leave the school, although this is from a well below average level on starting school. As a result, their achievement through the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching ensures all pupils achieve well through the school and is raising standards.
- Pupils' standards in ICT have improved considerably and are now average.
- Proportions of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment are low.

Commentary

1. Children join the nursery class with a wide range of backgrounds and attainment, although overall attainment is low, particularly in their language and mathematical skills. A significant number have very limited prior experiences and they are still at an early stage of learning English. However, clear routines and very good relationships ensure all children settle very quickly into the school. This allows them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and builds a strong foundation for future learning. Teachers in nursery and reception classes provide a well-planned range of activities that encourage children to achieve well in all areas of learning. This is particularly evident in the effective use of good resources to promote physical development, where children reach nationally expected levels by the time they begin Year 1. However, children's good overall achievement is from a low level and most are still performing at well below the expected standards by the time they begin Year 1.
2. Effective teaching in Years 1 and 2 maintains pupils' good achievement, although their limited skills restrict their overall attainment. Current overall attainment in Year 2 is well below that found nationally. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have generally reflected these low standards although there have been variations relating to the relative strengths of different year groups. The trend of results has been falling as a result of significantly stronger performance in the 2000 tests. However, the 2004 results in reading show significant improvements over the last two years and are now above those in similar schools. This has resulted from well-planned and successful strategies to improve provision and standards. Teachers are now turning similar attention to writing and having a very positive impact through new measures such as RML¹.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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¹ This is a structured approach to developing writing with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' phonic skills. Pupils are carefully grouped and continuous assessment ensures that tasks are carefully matched to promote skills, knowledge and understanding.

reading	15.1 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	10.5 (12.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.3 (15.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good because consistently good teaching builds on the foundation of pupils' earlier learning. The school's recent Year 6 national test results have improved at a faster rate than the national improvements. The 2004 results were well below the national average in English and science. Results in mathematics, however, were below average. These results were in line with those in schools with similar socio-economic backgrounds. However, past results have been weakened by substantial mobility and numbers of pupils with little English who have joined the school close to the tests. When these pupils' results are removed, the school's performance is stronger. In 2003, for example, mathematics results reached the national average and were well above those in similar schools. English results were above those of other schools. The equivalent 2004 figures are likely to show a similar picture. It is clear from observations and the increasingly detailed school records that the present Year 6 pupils are making better than expected progress. This improved progress is also a feature of the work of younger pupils through the school. However, there continue to be weaknesses in the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in all tested subjects, restricting overall standards. Current Year 6 pupils are attaining at below average levels overall, although this represents further improvement in the school's standards.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (24.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.1 (25.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.8 (25.0)	28.6 (28.6)

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

- Pupils in Year 6 are reaching standards in ICT that are in line with those expected for their age. This is a significant improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection report and represents good achievement from pupils' limited standards and experiences when they enter the school. New resources and improved methods for teaching the subject are helping teachers to ensure a better range of work for pupils to use ICT in many subjects. Effective training has given staff much greater confidence, and this is leading to better teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they make good progress. Their needs are quickly identified so that lessons can be modified to support their achievement. Regularly reviewed individual education plans highlight individual strengths and needs, and targets reflect the progress made. All such pupils take a full part in all lessons, and teachers and support staff make good use of close personal knowledge of pupils to help them learn. This is one of the features that contribute to the very good equality of access and opportunity offered to all pupils.

6. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), including refugees, achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment. They are accurately identified and work is targeted successfully. They benefit from the good range of support provided in all aspects of their school life. The co-ordinator and senior managers have good knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils' needs. Good leadership makes a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The school has considered the needs of pupils carefully, with RML providing a good foundation for those who are in the early stages of learning English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures their **very good** personal development. However, attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships ensure pupils' very good attitudes to school, their work and each other.
- Teachers set very high standards for conduct and pupils behave very well.
- Staff throughout the school consistently use strategies to manage behaviour well.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory because unauthorised absence levels are too high.

Commentary

7. The school's great emphasis on developing positive attitudes and values in pupils and boosting their self-confidence is a significant strength. There is clear respect between pupils, teachers and support staff, with very positive attitudes to learning in all areas of the school. These attitudes support and promote effective learning and, as a result, pupils achieve well. Pupils are confident and generally proud of their school. They actively support the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities provided for them. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use very effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to praise and rewards, and their behaviour is very good.
8. In lessons throughout the school, pupils behave well, listen and concentrate very well and persevere with their work. Pupils of all backgrounds and ages mix well and enjoy harmonious relationships with adults and classmates. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are keen to participate fully in activities. Pupils take an active part in the life of the school. For example, the school council helped to organise fundraising to buy large playground equipment.
9. Separate daily assemblies for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 are well planned and follow the same theme for a week. Assemblies promote pupils' good spiritual awareness by giving time for them to reflect on important themes in life such as forgiveness. The school uses outside speakers to support these assembly themes and widen pupils' experiences and understanding. Pupils respond very well during the act of collective worship. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to consider fundamental questions. For example, Year 6 pupils display their questions such as "I wonder why the world started? I wonder why people don't live long?" The good quality of pupils' awareness is particularly revealed as they show increasing confidence when expressing feelings and thoughts.
10. Pupils' moral development is promoted effectively. There are whole-school rules and pupils are successfully taught to learn right from wrong. Year 5 pupils, for example, have made a colourful display of the school rules. Older pupils show their increasing maturity as they support younger ones through initiatives such as 'Playground Friends', and act as good role models. The response of all members of staff to any poor behaviour and bullying is managed in accordance with good school policies in a consistent way. Pupils and most parents recognise that this is handled quickly and efficiently. Older pupils have been given tasks in class and around the school that develop their sense of responsibility well.

11. The school actively promotes appreciation of a wide range of cultural traditions. Different cultural backgrounds are celebrated in displays around the school which successfully ensure pupils' recognition and understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils have displayed the work of black artists by evaluating and copying their art and writing short biographies. Music and art contribute effectively to develop pupils' good awareness of cultures through a range of experiences, often making very good use of visitors to the school from varied cultural backgrounds. The school actively promotes music with a range of styles and traditions being reflected in both lessons and after-school clubs.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.2	School data:	3.6
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

12. Whole-school attendance is unsatisfactory, although the attendance of the majority of pupils is good. The attendance figures are depressed by the periodic absences of some pupils from traveller families. In addition, a number of families do not support the school's endeavours to reduce the unauthorised absence of a significant minority of pupils. The punctuality of those who attend on a regular basis is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality education with good teaching and learning. The curriculum gives all pupils a good range of opportunities, enhanced by very good extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports and the arts.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching with a high degree of consistency enables all pupils to learn well through the school. Teachers have good personal knowledge of pupils but make **satisfactory** use of the improving assessment information.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers establish very good relationships, which motivate pupils to learn.
- Well-established routines and high behaviour expectations encourage good behaviour and hard work.
- Teachers improve pupils' learning through very good use of resources in their enthusiastic explanations and presentations.
- Teachers' good personal knowledge of pupils enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to make good progress.
- There is not enough use made of assessment information to challenge pupils and develop greater independence.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (18%)	30 (56%)	13 (24%)	1 (2%)	0	0

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

13. The overall quality of teaching has improved on the standards of provision seen in the last inspection. The proportion of lessons graded as good and better has improved and there were fewer unsatisfactory lessons observed in the inspection. This reflects

the good quality of leadership as there have been very substantial changes in staff in the intervening period. In the last two years, 13 teachers have left the school and 14 have been recruited, which has been a significant impediment to consistency and improvement. A clear strength of teaching is now the consistency of approach in which teachers share planning and organisation to improve their work. This team approach contributes to the stability of the school and is reflected in better attitudes and higher achievement for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. Parents and pupils are positive about the good standard of teaching.

14. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage classes ensures children learn well. Children of all backgrounds settle very quickly and adults' care and concern for the children help them to gain confidence and make good progress. Staff work together very effectively as a team to give children a wide range of interesting and practical experiences. Lessons stress the importance of the key basic skills of language and number while encouraging children to explore new skills and ideas. Teachers achieve a good balance between the more formal teaching sessions and free choice activities where children can explore and investigate the world around them. Very good support from classroom assistants contributes to the calm learning atmosphere and variety of activities supervised. Staff assess children's progress regularly, recording carefully and successfully identifying opportunities to move children on in their learning.
15. The very good relationships created by teachers and other staff throughout the school ensure a very positive atmosphere for learning in classrooms. This motivates pupils well and encourages them to try hard. Good classroom organisation and lesson management ensure that little time is lost. Pupils respond well to teachers' well-established routines and this contributes to their achievement. Teachers' high behaviour expectations are clearly stated and most pupils are keen to meet these, improving their learning. As a result, pupils gain confidence and enthusiasm as they engage in all activities.
16. Teachers give enthusiastic explanations that capture pupils' attention very well. In many RML lessons, for example, this fires the atmosphere and leads to pupils' very good learning. A significant contribution to many very good presentations is teachers' very effective use of resources. In particular, the new interactive whiteboards are used confidently to aid explanations and activities.
17. Most teachers effectively use their good personal knowledge of pupils to set increasingly secure levels of challenge. For example, teachers' questioning is usually well pitched to make pupils with different levels of attainment think hard about their answers. Greater opportunities for pupils to discuss their work are also used very effectively by teachers to extend pupils' learning and judge the success of lessons. Teachers make and record increasingly detailed formal assessments that they use to steer their planning. However, there is less consistent use of this information to raise the level of challenge to build on pupils' prior attainment. This is evident in work that does not encourage pupils to gain independence in their learning. For example, pupils could have more opportunities to plan and undertake their own investigations in subjects such as science. This particularly restricts pupils' opportunities to reach the higher level of attainment by the time they leave the school. Although most older pupils know their targets for improvement, they are less clear of how they can achieve them.

18. The quality of support for pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. This is because assessment is used well to analyse pupils' needs and design activities that build carefully on their prior learning. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are identified well and have appropriate access to learning in and outside the classroom. In the best lessons seen, pupils were carefully placed close to the teacher and systematically involved by accurately matching questions to their stage of development. In many instances, whole-class teaching modelled the skills that pupils would practise and apply in group work. Opportunities to talk with their partner were successfully used to improve learning. The emphasis placed on speaking and listening across the curriculum helps these pupils and is often reflected in their willingness to have a go and respond with confidence. Where support is less effective, it is not planned with sufficient attention given to individual pupils' needs or was not clearly focused.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and support staff are aware of the needs of pupils identified as requiring additional help. They plan work that provides good levels of challenge, and give effective support so that these pupils are fully involved in lessons, learn well and succeed.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**, with a **very good** range of extra-curricular activities. Overall, the accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is very good.
- Extra-curricular provision enriches the curriculum very well.
- Good accommodation and learning resources support the teaching of the curriculum well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly through very good support staff.

Commentary

20. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. The weaknesses in balance and provision for art and design, ICT and religious education have now been successfully remedied, and provision for ICT in particular has been substantially improved. The curriculum provides a good range of worthwhile activities and experiences, which meets the needs of pupils well, and the curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Many good opportunities are taken to link together subjects so that learning is meaningful and the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.
21. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have visited Bethnal Green Museum to support their work in history. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have enhanced their learning with visits to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs for sporting, artistic, language and musical activities. These are very well attended by pupils of all ages, with many pupils joining more than one club. In

addition, there is a breakfast club, an after-school club and provision for gifted and talented pupils through the Excellence in Cities Scheme.

22. The staff work hard to ensure that all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils, enjoy very good equality of access and opportunity. The extremely strong relationships make pupils of different backgrounds and abilities feel able to play a full part in all activities. Work is usually planned to challenge pupils at the correct level of difficulty, making good use of teachers' personal knowledge of pupils. Where pupils need some extra help, staff identify needs early and arrange for appropriate provision. If pupils have specific needs, the school ensures that the necessary resources are available.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are accurately assessed, using outside agency support if necessary, and their individual education plans are targeted to help them learn. Teachers and well-trained support staff work together well in teams so that these pupils have opportunities for both independent and supported work. The provision outlined in statements of special educational need is fully in place and reviewed annually in line with the Code of Practice guidance. Good systems ensure that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.
24. Good provision is made for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Opportunities are carefully planned throughout the curriculum to celebrate and enhance cultural and linguistic diversity. Many of the staff act as very good models for such diversity, with pupils freely sharing information about their languages and cultures. The EAL co-ordinator and assistants are bilingual themselves and provide pupils with further insights through a Spanish club. As a result of this emphasis, pupils feel pride in their own multicultural identities and are predisposed to explore other cultures openly and spontaneously. Resources and displays strongly reflect pupils' diverse backgrounds and create a positive learning environment.
25. The headteacher and governors have paid good attention to the recruitment of good teachers and support staff. As a result, there is a good match between the teaching staff and the needs of the curriculum. Teachers are very well supported by experienced teaching assistants. Accommodation is good and has been much improved since the previous inspection. The indoor accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum, has been attractively refurbished, is well maintained and provides a good place in which to work. Many areas for small group work have been created by converting spaces previously used for storage, but this has led to a shortage of storage space for learning resources. The outdoor accommodation is good and provides a variety of facilities for sports activities, leisure, recreation and quiet reflection. Teaching and learning resources are good. The resources for ICT, judged as unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, are now good.

Care, guidance and support

The pastoral care, welfare, support and guidance provided by the school are **very good**. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils trust the staff and know their concerns and opinions are valued and acted upon.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good welfare support and pastoral care.

- The very good arrangements for child protection, health and safety.
- The high level of mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- The importance placed on the concerns and opinions of pupils.

Commentary

26. The school provides very good pastoral care, support and guidance, extremely well matched to the individual needs of pupils and their families. Staff know their pupils very well and this enables the school to provide an ethos within which everyone is encouraged to work hard and do their best. The school has very positive attitudes towards all pupils and values the contribution they make to its life and work. The school councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and have established strong links with management. Induction arrangements when pupils first join the school are good. The school regularly undertakes a review of every pupil's personal and academic development and implements effective intervention strategies where necessary.
27. The relationships and trust amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils say they are confident that there is always someone who will listen and respond to their need if they have a concern or need support. The learning mentor makes a very good contribution in this regard, as well as linking with parents and other external sources of support where necessary. A 'One Stop Shop' facility for advising families on financial, housing, social or welfare issues has been established within the school, although it is independently financed. The school, as a result, has a very good awareness of the needs of vulnerable families.
28. The arrangements for child protection are very good. They are effective because those responsible are experienced and well trained. Health and safety procedures are rigorous, with risk assessment, incidents and consequent actions being meticulously recorded. The school is cleaned to a high standard. There is good provision for first aid. The good programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is sensitive to the diverse needs of pupils. The school embraces pupils' different faiths and cultures and ensures that everyone is encouraged to participate in the widest possible curriculum and educational experience. The standards of pastoral care, welfare, guidance and support are now very good in every respect, and this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works hard to develop a **good** working partnership with parents. The engagement with the local community and involvement in community programmes is **good**. Links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effort the school makes to develop a close partnership with parents.
- The good outreach into the local community.
- The involvement in community support programmes.
- Good links with other primary schools, although links with secondary schools are weaker.

Commentary

29. The school works hard to establish a close partnership with parents and to support and encourage them to participate in their children's learning. As a result, it has continued to build on the improvements reported in the previous inspection. Opportunities are provided for parents to participate in school activities and gain a better understanding of the teaching and learning processes. Parents have positive views about the quality of education and standards of care provided, and feel comfortable when approaching the school with questions or concerns. The majority of parents consider that they receive good information about what their children will be expected to learn, although a few wanted more information about the curriculum. The school provides a termly curriculum information sheet for parents and a three-weekly newsletter.
30. The annual reports provide a good summary of pupils' personal and academic progress. The reports demonstrate that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils. There are regular consultation evenings and these are well attended. During these review meetings, parents and their children discuss and agree targets and ways in which parents can support future learning. Parents of pupils assessed as having special educational needs attend regular review meetings. Parents are regularly invited to attend year group assemblies and often take the opportunity to do so.
31. The parent-teacher association provides good support for the school by organising social and fund-raising events. Such events as the Christmas Fair and recent Latin Festival are very well supported. A number of parent volunteers help in school on a regular basis and support school trips. There are good links with the wider community. The school choir and steel band perform regularly at venues throughout the local area, and there are good links with Millwall Football Club and community centre. The school is currently working with a local theatre company. The good links with the wider community enhance the curriculum and add to pupils' experiences.
32. Links with other schools are good. There are close links with schools in the local primary cluster, with shared professional development opportunities. There is a partnership arrangement with Goldsmiths University and the City Academy. Work experience places are provided for a number of local secondary schools. Pupils transfer to over twenty secondary schools spread over an extensive area. Whilst they are well supported before and during the transfer period, a close relationship only exists with very local secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is very good. Leadership of other staff, the governance and management of the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership, well supported by governors and key staff, gives a very good role model for pupils and other staff.
- There is an outstanding commitment to, and concern for, the needs of individual pupils.
- Very good management of the recruitment, deployment and induction of staff.

- Very effective financial management that enables the school to achieve its educational priorities well.
- Within a good pattern of self-evaluation and monitoring performance, many of the co-ordinators' roles have not developed to the highest pitch.

Commentary

33. The headteacher has a particularly clear vision for the future of the school. As well as the continuing drive to raise standards, she has high aspirations for a curriculum that will be of increasing relevance to pupils and their interests. Excellence in music and sport are high on the agenda. The headteacher is supported strongly in this ambition by senior staff and governors. The deputy headteacher drives the systems and analyses that allow the school to evaluate its performance and act on areas that do not meet its high aspirations and standards. Senior co-ordinators have put in place ambitious initiatives for their subjects, dedicated to raising standards and improving pupils' quality of education.
34. The governors are helping to shape the vision and direction of the school well. They visit the school regularly and offer good support to staff. By promoting the school's inclusion policies, they have helped to create a school ethos of equality, diversity and concern for individual pupils that is outstanding. Within this picture, leading staff are very good role models for pupils and other staff. This is central to the very good relationships pupils have with them. It is no surprise that many of the support staff make use of the school's in-service training to raise their qualifications, or that some of them are moving on to train as teachers.
35. The school's commitment to the full inclusion of pupils of all backgrounds is clear in the effective management of support for pupils with English as an additional language. Resources are appropriately targeted to ensure pupils' good progress. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and fully committed to raising pupils' achievement. The school has clear procedures for monitoring and analysing pupils' progress, which are used well to determine the deployment of resources and the nature of support required.
36. Leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory but some aspects need strengthening. The co-ordinator successfully oversees pupils' assessments and liaises with outside agencies when necessary. Class teachers are aware of pupils' personal needs and provide effectively for them, working closely with support staff. They write individual education plans that correctly address the needs for each pupil although some targets set are not sufficiently detailed. The co-ordinator is not sufficiently involved in tracking and monitoring targets and pupils' progress and achievement. She therefore has limited scope for checking and ensuring that pupils are making progress and learning well.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

<i>Income and expenditure (£)</i>		<i>Balances (£)</i>	
Total income	1,428,045	Balance from previous year	91,267
Total expenditure	1,346,211	Balance carried forward to the next	173,101

Expenditure per pupil	3,638		
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37. The school and its governors are committed to best value for the pupils' education, and this helps to ensure very good financial management. Although they have no written statement, they have a good understanding of the principles of consultation, comparison and competition. Staff, parents and pupils' views are important to them. They study school data and make comparisons with other schools on a like-for-like basis, and are ready to challenge the leadership in the best interests of the pupils. Although the balance carried forward this year is high, governors have clearly set out allocations to specific projects that will be realised in the coming year. Amongst these are substantial building refurbishments, including relocation of the office to improve school security.

38. Strong systems of assessment allow the teachers to track pupils' progress, and therefore to improve the curriculum and organise teaching groups to aid learning. The systems are not complete enough to enable teachers to utilise the data at its sharpest level. For instance, there is limited use to predict where pupils ought to be term by term, or to plan tasks that challenge different ability levels. The rigorous monitoring of teaching, with detailed feedback to individual teachers, has been effective in raising the quality and consistency of teaching. This in turn has helped to halt the decline in standards around the time of the previous inspection, and secure a significant upward trend. Wisely, the school has concentrated on the core subjects in this drive. The leadership roles of other subjects are not as well defined, or as influential. Some aspects of the core co-ordination roles are not at the peak of effectiveness, for instance in the ownership of standards. This is partly due to the assessment systems, which do not give a full tracking picture. Good development plans identify this weakness and show a calendar for addressing it.

39. The school has undergone a turbulent period in terms of staffing. This has been well managed, leaving the school stronger than it was before, with a distinct feeling of stability. Induction of new staff has therefore been crucial. Many new teachers are full of praise for the very good level of support, tutoring and mentoring they have received. The development plan does not contain an agenda for considering workload linked to curriculum planning that would enable the school to evaluate smarter forms of planning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **good** in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of very effective learning, where children can make good progress.
- Children's achievement in physical development is very good.
- Good co-ordination has enabled very good teamwork to develop amongst the staff.
- Good planning makes the most of opportunities for children to interact and mature.
- Very good assessment enables teachers to track children's progress closely, although there is no accurate picture of children's attainment when they start in the nursery.
- Basic skills for speaking, listening, reading, writing and number are taught well.
- Language teaching is not as well developed in some nursery creative activities.

Commentary

40. At the time of the inspection there were fifteen children in the reception class. There are forty nursery places: ten full-time and thirty part-time, shared between the morning and afternoon sessions. A further intake into the reception class after Christmas will create a second class, with good space available for these numbers. The attainment of the nursery children when they start school spans a wide range, and is at a low level overall. They make good progress but, on entry to the reception year, they are still well below the average. However, given this starting point, the children achieve well. The good progress continues and, by the end of reception, the children are much closer to attaining the Early Learning Goals. Children do reach the average in physical development, and achieve very well in this area.
41. The co-ordinator monitors the work in the Foundation Stage well and this is helping to improve all aspects of the provision. She has developed a uniform approach to planning, assessment and display. This has brought about very good teamwork, which makes these systems effective. Staff put a lot of work into assessment, particularly the very detailed record of achievement. Parents like this record because it gives them a very clear idea of how well their children are doing. The missing piece is a suitable way of recording the nursery attainment right at the children's starting point. This means it is difficult for staff to judge a full value-added picture from start to finish of the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is well planned to cover all the six areas of learning. During the day, children experience a very good balance of formal work in basic skills and free choice activities where they can explore and investigate the world around them.
42. The adults' care and concern for the progress of the children is one of many reasons why they achieve so well. Teaching is good. It stresses the importance of the key basic skills of language and number. In the nursery, teachers usually work with individual children or very small groups, to be able to give them very personal attention. In reception, teachers work with the whole class in the mornings, to give children the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other within a larger group, and

prepare for the more formal approach in Year 1. Teachers get very good support from their classroom assistants. This contributes to the calm learning atmosphere and variety of activities supervised. The next major step planned is to establish closer curriculum continuity with Year 1 to ensure a smooth transition.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

43. This area of learning receives a high profile when children start in the nursery and they achieve well. The morning children make rapid progress. The nursery staff model kind and considerate behaviour, are very patient, and instantly praise children for their successes. The children are beginning to pick up on this. The afternoon children have now settled well to indoor activities, but are not as calm in the outdoor situation. By the time they finish reception, most children are near to reaching the Early Learning Goals. This is due to good teaching, very good relationships and a well-planned and ordered environment in which children quickly settle and feel secure. They soon lose their dependence on adults as they begin to explore their classroom and the reception learning areas. They are encouraged to take responsibility for jobs around the classroom, and are becoming confident to work independently on their tasks. All learn to see the importance of keeping the environment neat and safe, and children tidy up enthusiastically. Behaviour is very good. The reception children get on well with the older pupils they meet at playtimes. Because staff are skilled in knowing how young children learn, they plan a good range of activities to develop confidence and social skills. These lead to good sharing, growing interest and concentration, as well as a strong desire to learn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

44. Teachers plan carefully to provide a structured range of activities specifically to develop the children's language skills, which are low when they start school. All children achieve well, and make good progress, so that they move steadily nearer to the levels expected for their age as they start Year 1. In the nursery, this is because of good teaching of basic skills. Teachers share the children's joy when there is a breakthrough in a particular skill, for instance in writing the first letter accurately. Children listen avidly to exciting or humorous stories. Adults take every opportunity to catch children between activities, to share another story. The staff are well experienced in encouraging the children to listen to each other with increasing attention. By the end of the nursery, children have learned that books are fun and that reading is useful. They also enjoy role play in the 'grocery shop', where they make marks on paper to represent orders and bills as a preparation for real writing.
45. The reception teachers extend these skills well by taking children in small steps through the stepping stones² to learning. Reception children listen well to adults and to each other. Staff use this to extend children's speech. They encourage 'talking partners' where children share their ideas, which are then used for their writing. The teachers are sensitive to the children's needs; one group is beginning to put words together, another group puts letters together to make words, and children who have special educational needs enjoy learning how to form letters correctly. Overall they achieve well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

46. Children start school with a low level of skills in number. In the nursery, the teachers use a wide range of mathematical and play equipment to let children explore number,

² These are the small stages in learning described in national guidance for teaching children in the Foundation Stage.

pattern and shape. Children investigate shape as 'triangle detectives', going out with their clipboards searching for triangles in the play area. Teachers get them to count anything and everything. The children enjoy playing with the small elephants, putting them into order and absorbing ideas of size and pattern. The teachers plan good learning activities, and note down any progress the children make. They encourage children to know and use mathematical words.

47. Reception teachers extend the basic mathematical skills well. They encourage children to work in larger numbers by counting how many of them there are in a circle. They learn to solve simple problems, like adding one on, and taking one off. They make good progress and, by the end of reception, most children are nearer to the Early Learning Goals, although still below the level expected for their age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

48. Children enter the nursery with limited experience of the world. The teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities that build up children's experience and start them off on simple observations to build a foundation for later science work. Children are fascinated by these, and watch closely. For instance, in the ice experiment, one little girl could not take her eyes off the slippery substance, and was speechless with wonder. The birthday topic helps children to deal with the idea of the passage of time, that some are older, some younger. They design birthday cakes and count the candles. They learn geography by moving around nursery rooms and the two play areas, later venturing out to the big school. They achieve well and begin to fill the gaps in their knowledge.
49. The good achievement continues in the reception class, where teachers build on the experiences and get children to ask more searching questions. They touch on religion by thinking about important festivals in different faiths. There is a wealth of culture and belief to draw on in the school. Children learn tolerance and to value other beliefs by getting on so well with each other. By the end of the reception year, many of the gaps are filled, but children are still below the level expected. In computer skills, however, the children achieve particularly well. They progress so rapidly that, from a limited start, they reach the appropriate level. Both the nursery and reception teachers take the children to the computer suite. Children behave very well and make the most of this opportunity. They learn basic skills for keying in letters, they enjoy using the number programs, and get time to explore what the computer can do with art software. The teaching in this area is very good.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

50. Children start the nursery with nearly average skills in running, jumping and climbing, and play on large equipment such as tricycles and wheeled vehicles. Good teaching develops these further and, by the end of the reception year, most children reach the expected level. The morning children are considerate when they use the play equipment. They like to take turns and have a good eye on safety. The afternoon children are more adventurous. They have yet to learn that they will get a better experience if they share. The children already have quite good finger control when they start school. The teachers build on this by supplying a wide range of small tools, pencils and brushes, and good opportunities to use them.

51. The positive effect of this can be seen in the reception class during handwriting lessons. The children are very proud of their growing ability to form letters carefully. By the end of the year, the children are not far off the expected level. In outdoor play, the children share the large playground equipment with infants. They cope very well, set their own targets and keep within the limits of their confidence, but go that bit further each time. This is good exploration of a very good resource.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

52. Children start nursery with limited creativity overall. The nursery staff do everything they can to overcome this. They present numerous situations where children can pretend. Children take to different things. Girls like to take up the shopping experience, and the room is filled with busy pairs planning their parties and buying in the groceries. Boys tend to like the construction toys more, or explore the music corner with its interesting range of instruments. Children are developing increasing periods of involvement, which is good for their concentration. The teachers are tracking all this and there is gentle pressure for groups to widen their range of interest. Art and sculpture activities are popular, and well prepared. The staff are careful to let the children develop their own ideas. In most activities staff also draw out a lot of vocabulary and talk. In a few, the staff do not draw out sufficient language, since the planning does not go into the detail of what vocabulary to use.
53. The teaching is good. All these techniques are extended well in the reception year, because there is very close co-operation and planning. Much valuable support is given by the nursery nurses and support staff, who are totally committed to the children's wellbeing. Therefore, by the end of the year, the children are much more imaginative and confident to express their ideas. They make good progress, as can be seen in the quality of their craftwork on display. Overall, they are not too far from the levels expected as they move to Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
- Good leadership and management has improved provision.
- The literacy curriculum is carefully adapted and tailored to meet pupils' needs.
- Speaking and listening skills are effectively developed in the subject and across the curriculum.

Commentary

54. Overall, standards in English are well below those found nationally by the end of Year 2, and below them in Year 6. However, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those from ethnic

minority backgrounds, make good progress. This is due to good teaching and the effective tracking of pupils' progress to identify ways to improve standards.

55. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Although many pupils' speaking is constrained by a limited vocabulary, many are willing to contribute when discussing texts and when presenting their work at the end of lessons. This is because speaking is well promoted both in English lessons and in other subjects, often through the frequent use of partner talk and modelling by teachers. This approach supports pupils' language development and often encourages more pupils to contribute to discussion and participate more actively in lessons. The frequent use of talk as a vehicle for learning is clearly making a difference in terms of pupils' increasing confidence in learning in this way.
56. Most pupils achieve well in reading. From a low starting point, they develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words and use the context to guess meaning. Many pupils show good skills in finding information and older pupils use books and the Internet to develop their research skills. Guided reading lessons are used well and are assessed against clear objectives, with good diagnostic information used to set targets for improvement. From a low start, pupils make good progress in writing by Year 6. The school is aware of the need to further raise pupils' competence in writing and has begun to use guided writing more frequently. However, many pupils do not use joined handwriting, even by the end of Year 6.
57. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of English, which is often reflected in the wide range of methods used. They use RML effectively because it provides opportunities to demonstrate and model basic skills that are needed so much by pupils, given their low starting points. Lessons are well structured, with pupils intensively practising sounds and spelling before moving on to guided practice and tasks where they apply the skills rehearsed during the introduction. Past work shows that teachers' marking is inconsistent and not always explicit enough in guiding pupils about how they might improve their work. Where teaching was occasionally less effective, this was mainly due to the lack of emphasis on expression in reading and developing pupils' skills to become independent readers.
58. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has good knowledge and skills, and a clear overview of the subject. Careful monitoring has led to clear targets being identified for improving provision and outcomes, especially in writing. This has led to the introduction of successful strategies to tackle and improve pupils' low standards. Well-planned intervention strategies, like the reading recovery programme and RML, are being successfully used to raise pupils' achievement. As a result, progress since the last inspection has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, with some good examples in history where subject content is judiciously used in literacy lessons, and in science, where specific vocabulary is carefully presented. One strength in this area is the emphasis given to learning through talk, although more systematic planning is lacking in some other subjects, such as religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well through good teaching, with particularly high expectations in Year 6.
- Good subject management with rigorous monitoring of teaching has moved the subject forward well.
- Overall, teachers do not stress the development of pupils' independence enough.
- Assessment systems do not provide a complete tracking picture through the whole school.

Commentary

60. There has been some disturbance in the pattern and quality of teaching in the years since the previous inspection. The school has done well to halt the decline in standards. Good co-ordination of the subject, using the valuable strategy of rigorous monitoring, has brought about an improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching. This has contributed to the trend of rising standards in recent years. Although standards are still below average by Year 6, this represents good achievement, better than many similar schools. These standards are reflected in the current Year 6, although there are clear signs of further improvements in progress. These result from good teaching making effective use of stronger assessment contributing to the match of tasks and pupils' targets, and good support from classroom assistants.
61. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been closer to the expected levels for pupils of that age than those for pupils at Year 2. This is because the younger pupils need the time to consolidate basic skills. Currently, the standards are well below average. Teaching of six- and seven-year-olds has improved since the previous inspection because teachers plan more securely and have better skills of managing pupils. All lessons are now orderly, well regulated and based on very good relationships. Pupils listen and behave well. Teachers use their assistants effectively and ensure they know exactly what to do.
62. Teaching, overall, is good throughout the school. Teachers are very successful at motivating pupils. They encourage pupils to have confidence in their own thinking skills. They share key information, like the lesson objectives, to help pupils understand the context of their learning. As a result, pupils have developed a positive attitude to mathematics. Teachers realise the importance of creating good learning conditions. In most lessons the pupils use their own whiteboards to good effect as they discuss with their partners the possible strategies to use for solving number problems. Throughout the school, teachers use a new strategy called 'talking partners', where pupils share ideas with each other. It is quick, and pupils love it. It is very effective in grabbing and holding their attention and making them involved in the lessons.
63. Teaching in Year 6 is of a higher order. The pace is faster, causing pupils to think more rapidly. The demands are tougher, causing pupils to think harder. The engagement of pupils is more intense, creating excellent relationships as pupils rise to

the challenge. Pupils know that they are not just learning mathematics, they are acquiring life skills. The match of task to need is tuned to the finest degree; teaching assistants play a key role in helping weaker pupils to keep in touch. As a result, support for traveller pupils, pupils with special needs and those new to English is first rate. All these groups are making very good progress and achieving very well. The teachers are building up the pupils' competence by training them in learning skills. This will unlock the potential in these pupils and put them on track to reach the national average.

64. However, pupils are still very dependent on the teachers, and much of the work is unnecessarily formal. Skills to promote pupils' independence, like estimation, self-checking, and expressing their own strategies in greater depth, are not introduced into the curriculum early enough. While assessment and individually set targets are popular and useful, pupils do not understand the system of levels and criteria. Therefore, they cannot begin the process of self-evaluation, using the criteria to set their own targets. Teachers do not make full use of increasing information regarding each pupil's progress to consistently plan work that challenges pupils with different levels of attainment. The co-ordinator has started the audit of mathematics provision to check precisely these points.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Teachers use a good range of opportunities to enable pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. For instance, all pupils use the computer suite regularly to produce graphs and charts at various levels. They develop a suitable understanding of the different elements of data handling, through spreadsheets and other software. Through the medium of ICT, numeracy is beginning to be applied more intensively in science, geography and design and technology. All year groups now use another innovation, the computer-based individual learning programme. This is proving successful at motivating pupils well, addressing different styles of learning and increasing the range of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well through the school, although standards of attainment are below average.
- Very good relationships ensure an effective atmosphere for learning and pupils develop very good attitudes.
- Assessment information is not used enough to plan pupils' tasks and activities.
- Not enough attention is paid to developing pupils' independence in investigations.

Commentary

66. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the school's provision for science. Standards in the Year 6 national tests in recent years have been consistently very low, except in 2002. The 2004 results were somewhat better and the standards shown by the current Year 6 pupils maintain and extend this trend.

Although standards of attainment in Year 2 are well below average, standards in Year 6 are below average, representing good achievement through the school. However, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment remain relatively weak.

67. Throughout the school, teaching is good and teachers show considerable strengths in their organisation and management of lessons. Teachers plan lessons well, making effective use of good resources, and learning in most lessons proceeds with good pace. This is improving pupils' standards of attainment. A strong emphasis on discussion is helping pupils gain and correctly use scientific vocabulary, although their limited language skills restrict their learning. Teachers make sure that pupils listen carefully, learn and use the new scientific language associated with each topic. Those pupils with English as an additional language particularly benefit from this good attention to developing scientific vocabulary. They are supported well and care is taken to ensure they follow the language of the lessons, helping them to make good progress with other pupils.
68. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils ensure a positive ethos that promotes and ensures good learning. They have an effective approach to managing behaviour that sets clear guidelines to pupils and rewards good behaviour. Pupils respond very well to this and behave very well, particularly in the older year groups. Pupils' very good attitudes ensure they pay good attention, try hard and learn well. As a result, little time in lessons is wasted and teachers are able to keep the pace of learning going.
69. Teachers and support assistants make good use of their knowledge of pupils to adapt activities for the different levels of ability in their class. For example, very good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make very good progress. However, there is less consistent use of the developing assessment information to plan tasks with sufficient challenge for all pupils. In particular, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' independent skills in planning and carrying out investigations. This restricts the opportunities for higher attaining pupils to reach above average levels of attainment.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently reviewed the curriculum to meet national guidance, and monitors planning to get a good indication of what is happening through the school. Increasing assessment information is being used to track pupils' progress and identify further developments for the curriculum as a whole. Plans are now in place to extend the role to include the observation of teaching that will be needed to focus development securely at raising standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and effective action have raised standards significantly.
- There have been good improvements in resources, including an ICT suite and high quality software, that have contributed to a rise in standards.

- Good training has improved teachers' subject knowledge and the quality of teaching and, hence, pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
- Teachers do not ensure that ICT is used systematically in other subjects.
- Effective procedures for monitoring and assessment have been developed but insufficient use is made of this data to inform planning.

Commentary

71. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and standards are now average. Good subject leadership by the co-ordinator has turned this subject round from a weakness to a strength. The co-ordinator has supported staff use of improved computer resources more effectively than in the past. Staff confidence and expertise have developed as a result of training and support, and they use the ICT suite well. The new ICT system is well managed, and effective technical support maintains a wide range of high quality software matched to pupils' ages.
72. Pupils throughout the school are reaching standards in line with those expected for their ages. Because pupils enter the school with very low standards and limited experiences in the subject, this represents good achievement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to ensure that an appropriate range of work is provided for pupils. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in the ICT suite and the two Year 6 classes. Teachers use these well, and they are having a positive impact on pupils' learning because the clearer visual effects help their understanding in all subjects. Attention is paid to developing monitoring and assessment systems. However, these are not fully used to inform planning or to ensure a close match between pupils' ability and the work set.
73. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 show an increasing range of skills in using software. For example, pupils in Year 1 move the mouse accurately to access software. In Year 3, pupils change the size of the font and use Clip Art to create colourful party invitations. In Year 4, pupils show greater confidence with appropriate software, use the undo button, drag and drop images and save their work illustrating part of their science topic. Pupils in Year 6 make effective use of software to present their work on the history topic of The Tudors. A popular after-school ICT club promotes good pupil achievement in the subject and allows pupils to have regulated access to information on the Internet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to promote learning in other subjects. Work in the computer suite covers different subjects although, currently, much work is supporting the development of pupils' basic ICT skills. ICT is particularly well used in history, mathematics and English, where pupils have made presentations of their work, use software to develop their thinking and present information for a particular audience. However, teachers do not make full use of the computers that are in each of the classrooms to give pupils further opportunities to practise skills and support learning in a wider range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

75. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in history and geography. Two lessons were seen in history and pupils' past work indicates that standards are in line with national expectations. No lessons could be seen in geography and little past work was available. Both subjects are taught separately, using the nationally agreed schemes of work. All areas of the curriculum are effectively planned for and, in history, there are good links with other subjects. The school has recently focused on Black History Month and several displays throughout the school show work that links with pupils' work in English, mathematics, art and design, and design and technology. Both subjects are soundly co-ordinated by staff who are gaining an overview of their subject through increasing monitoring of planning and pupils' work. However, their opportunities to observe and analyse all aspects of provision have been limited.
76. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 studied famous historical characters such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They have made books about them and could recall facts about their lives and work. Pupils in Year 4 are studying World War II. In the lesson seen, the teacher's use of role play helped pupils to imagine much more accurately what life was like as an evacuee. Pupils in Year 6 studied the Tudors, and included investigations into the life of Henry VIII and made high quality books using computer technology. The content of their books indicates good understanding of some of the significant events in his reign.
77. Due to the structure of the curriculum, **geography** is not taught in the first term and there was little evidence available. Discussions with pupils and examination of their books revealed that pupils in Year 6 had studied the rain cycle. Most explained this accurately, correctly using terms such as 'condensation' and 'evaporation'.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those expected for pupils' ages, although most have satisfactory understanding of several world religions in addition to their own.
- Tasks are not consistently matched to pupils' abilities.

Commentary

78. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and of a similar level to their attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment is often hampered by their limited literacy skills. In recent years, however, religious education has not had a high profile in the school and some teaching has been weak. Inconsistent coverage means that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have not developed progressively. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory and the position is improving. The subject co-ordinator keeps samples of pupils' work and monitors teachers' plans regularly. However, the overview of the subject has been limited by insufficient opportunities to monitor all aspects of provision.
79. Pupils in Year 6 have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of different faiths, although their progress in lessons is sound. They learn to appreciate the value of sacred books to Christians, Muslims and Sikhs and relate their learning to their own lives. The quality of their written work is below what should be expected of them, although there were very few examples of work to examine during the inspection. In discussion, pupils express their points of view clearly but have too few experiences to draw upon because of the lack of focus on religious education.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The school makes good use of the local Christian centre as a resource and one of the centre volunteers is a regular visitor, giving support in assemblies and lessons. Teachers plan lessons together, which ensures that pupils from the same year group in different classes receive the same lesson content. However, work in pupils' books indicates that tasks do not always take enough account of the differing needs of particular groups of pupils in the class. This has a particularly negative impact on pupils whose language skills are weaker than their understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. Few lessons could be seen during the inspection in these subjects. Only two lessons were seen in design and technology and one in art and design. No lessons were seen in physical education. As a result, inspectors sampled each subject through examination of school records, curriculum planning and pupils' past work where available. Discussions were held with co-ordinators. It is not possible to make firm judgements about provision, standards or teaching in these subjects. Co-ordinators' work is satisfactory and all have initial action plans to steer their coming work. However, there have been few opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning and this has limited their ability to contribute to development planning.

82. Much of pupils' work in **art and design** grows out of their work in other subjects. For example, throughout the school, pupils make detailed and effective drawings that support their learning in history. They use computer drawing and painting programs with increasing confidence to extend the range of their work. Pupils learn about the work of famous artists, such as Miro and Picasso, and employ some of their methods and imagery in their own work, using a good range of media. Some of the highest quality work has been created with support of visiting artists, including some three-dimensional work. Pupils' learning is further supported by the art club, which enables them to extend their range of media and techniques. The quality of provision in this subject was rewarded in 2003 by the gaining of an Artsmark award.
83. Past work suggests that teaching in **design and technology** has been inconsistent and pupils' standards are below average, weaker than at the time of the last inspection. However, in the observed lessons, teaching and learning were good and pupils made good progress. The school has recognised the weaknesses in the subject and introduced a good strategy, using outside specialist support to improve co-ordination and provide training for staff.
84. All strands of **physical education** are covered and provision is enhanced through the use of a range of external coaches in hockey, basketball, netball and rugby. Pupils participate in a range of competitions in conjunction with other schools and have done well in hockey tournaments. .

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to pupils' good learning and achievement.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments and take part in musical events outside school.
- Music is enhanced through a range of visitors.

Commentary

85. Pupils' attainment in music is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Their overall achievement is good. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because most teachers have benefited from the leadership of the headteacher, who is a music specialist, and from the contribution of advisory teachers. Because much of the teaching is focused on the voice, standards in singing are good.
86. Most of the teaching was good in lessons seen during the inspection. Well-established routines, where pupils work in a big circle and always start with warm-up voice exercises, make the pupils confident. Skills are effectively modelled by the teachers and sufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to practise singing, combined with effective use of hand signs and musical notation. Singing skills are developed well by teaching pupils to repeat phrases. The good pace of the lessons maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Previous learning is revised well, and musical vocabulary is

reinforced through good, careful questioning that encourages pupils to think and answer using correct terms.

87. Provision is enhanced through effective training of teachers from the 'Voices Foundation' and the use of a handbook with clear links to the National Curriculum. Many pupils learn to play the recorder or the guitar with another group learning to drum. The school participates successfully in many national music festivals and has a thriving choir and a steel band. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development. The quality of leadership is very good and has a clear, positive impact on pupils' achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Although few lessons could be observed in this area of the school's work, significant elements were strong features in many lessons in all subjects. Throughout all lessons, pupils are made to feel valued, secure, confident and aware. For example, teachers made very good use of discussion in pairs and groups to help pupils to gain confidence in expressing their beliefs. Additionally, all classes have regular opportunities for discussion, sometimes through 'circle time'. The school has developed a very strong community atmosphere that pervades all aspects of its work. As a result, all pupils are given equal opportunities and status and they show very good respect for adults and each other. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to express their ideas and gain responsibilities, although teachers do not do this sufficiently consistently. For example, older pupils know their targets but are less sure of how they need to improve in order to achieve them. Lessons do not focus sufficiently on the skills pupils need to plan and organise their own work and learning. The school has a carefully planned programme for sex education and drugs awareness.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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