

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham, West Midlands

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 130944

Headteacher: Mrs Harbaksh Phull

Lead inspector: Mr Keith Edwards

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 April 2005

Inspection number: 268236

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	443
School address:	Stamford Road Handsworth Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B20 3LJ
Telephone number:	0121 464 2369
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Sadiqah Salmon
Date of previous inspection:	2 June 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westminster Primary School serves an urban area of Birmingham and draws almost all of its pupils from the immediate locality. Many families live in unfavourable circumstances. It is involved in the Excellence in Cities and Surestart projects as well as a programme to improve behaviour. The school is much larger than other primary schools with 443 pupils on roll. This includes the 58 children who attend the nursery. School numbers are very fluid as a high proportion of the pupils start or leave the school other than at the beginning of the school year. Sixty per cent of the pupils have an entitlement to free school meals which is well above the national average. The school has a very diverse ethnic population. Most of the pupils are learning English as an additional language, and of these 219 are at an early stage in acquiring the language. Attainment on entry to the nursery is much lower than average, although there is a significant variation in the pupils' achievement. There is a wide spread of ability in each class. Thirty-eight per cent of the pupils are on the school's list for special educational needs, mainly because they find it harder to learn than usual. This is well above the national average. Four pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is below average for the size of school.

Westminster Primary gained a Schools Achievement Award in 2001 but was found to have serious weaknesses when it was last inspected in June 2003, immediately after the current headteacher took up her post. The inspection report drew attention to low standards, weaknesses in the quality of teaching and management, shortcomings in the curriculum and in the provision for the children in the Foundation Stage and unsatisfactory systems to improve attendance.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21190	Keith Edwards	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	Science Religious education English as an additional language Personal, social and health education and citizenship
15236	Morag Thorpe	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation Stage
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education and no longer has serious weaknesses. This is because the headteacher has shown very good leadership in building a team to overcome the school's many difficulties identified in the last inspection. Although standards remain well below average in literacy at the end of Year 6, there are clear signs of improvement in English, mathematics and science. The high percentage of unsatisfactory teaching identified in the last report has been largely eliminated and the quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has led the drive to revitalise the school through a rigorous improvement programme and has successfully laid the foundations for the future development of the school.
- Standards, particularly in writing, are too low at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides very well for the personal development of the pupils and every member of the community is valued.
- The school provides a model for racial harmony and relationships are very good.
- The Foundation Stage enables the children to make a very good start to their learning.
- The school should make better use of its assessment data to identify individual pupils' needs and to raise their awareness of what they need to do to improve.
- The school needs a greater range of specialist expertise to support those children who are learning English as an additional language.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The pupils' **achievements are satisfactory** overall. The children start in the Foundation Stage with standards of attainment that are well below average; in their English communication skills many children have very low attainment because most of the children come from homes in which English is not the first language. The children make good, and often very good, progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development because the quality of the provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, by the start of Year 1, standards are still lower than national expectations, notably in language, communication and mathematical development and in the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. In Years 1 to 6, although the pupils achieve satisfactorily in English and mathematics, standards are well below the national average in English and below the national average in mathematics by the time the pupils leave school. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2, the pupils made good gains in reading and writing over previous years but standards remained below those achieved by pupils attending similar schools. The results in English and mathematics for the Year 6 pupils did not meet the targets set by the school and were in the lowest five per cent (E*) nationally. There are many factors beyond the school's control that contribute to these weak results but the school could make more use of assessment data to help all its pupils to improve. Statistical evidence shows that standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The school has rightly identified writing as a particular area of weakness and needs to do more to expand the range of the pupils' vocabulary. With the exception of religious education, where standards are broadly average, standards are below average in the other subjects of the curriculum at the end of Year 6.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils grow to become mature, confident and responsible. The pupils have positive attitudes towards school and relationships and behaviour are very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are improving.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education is now satisfactory.** Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching in the last inspection has been eliminated. **Teaching and learning are now satisfactory.** There are developing strengths in the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, in Year 2 and in Year 6. In these classes, the planning is thorough and the range of activities prepared for the pupils is stimulating and effective in enabling the pupils to learn. Throughout the school, there are good standards of discipline and effective use is made of the classroom assistants. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the work set is pitched at the right level to motivate pupils to achieve their best. Although the school has worked hard to improve the quality of marking, pupils should be given more guidance on how they can improve their work.

The curriculum provided by the school has also improved and is now satisfactory. The school has been particularly successful in its reorganisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum and in its approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. However, these improvements have yet to translate into higher standards in national tests. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and relationships with the parents are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has achieved the key milestone of ensuring that the school no longer has serious weaknesses. With the exception of standards, the school has remedied the shortcomings highlighted in the last inspection. The provision has improved significantly in the last two years. The headteacher continues to strive to make the school more effective through her commitment to high standards and her belief in teamwork. The ethos of the school is good. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds feel secure and confident and motivated to learn. The headteacher has motivated and empowered her colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. The teamwork between members of staff is a developing strength of the school. Subject managers have established a clear focus on raising standards and there is an atmosphere that encourages open discussion of effective classroom practice. This, together with the more formal programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, continues to improve the quality of teaching. The governors provide satisfactory support for the work of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties and are successful in maintaining the ethos. Financial systems are secure. Because the school has improved its effectiveness, it now provides satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and think highly of it. The pupils are proud of their school and feel they are valued and well supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to continue to raise standards, particularly in writing;
- to focus on developing the support for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language;
- to refine and improve its assessment systems to ensure work is targeted to individual pupils' needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The overall achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, is satisfactory. This is because the school has made significant improvements in the way that the pupils are taught. Nevertheless, standards are well below average by the time the pupils leave the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in English, particularly writing, in Year 2 and in Year 6.
- Standards, as measured in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, have risen faster than the national trend over the last four years.
- The children achieve very well in their personal and social development in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils who spend their entire primary education at Westminster tend to achieve well.

Commentary

1. The results of the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2004 were well below the national average in reading and writing and were in the bottom five per cent nationally in mathematics. In comparison to the performance of pupils in similar schools they were below average. The results in these tests have risen sharply over the last four years and predictions suggest that the current Year 2 pupils will consolidate this trend. However, an analysis of samples of the pupils' work indicates that standards remain well below average in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The pupils with special educational needs, and those pupils for whom English is an additional language, are sensitively supported with their learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Overall, in the infant classes the pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.9 (11.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.6 (10.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	12.7 (12.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.8 (21.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	21.7 (23.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.6 (23.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Over the past four years, at the end of Year 6, except for one year (2001), overall national test results have remained in the bottom five per cent nationally. There are only small differences in the attainment of boys and girls over this period. The results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2004 were no exception in English and mathematics, although there were encouraging signs of improvement in science. These results were well below average in comparison to similar schools in these subjects and the 2004 results show a further decline in mathematics. Although many pupils in both key stages do not make sufficient progress to

achieve the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6, or for the school to meet its targets, the pupils generally make satisfactory progress from a well-below average starting point. It is possible to identify reasons that contribute to the legacy of under attainment. A very high proportion of pupils is learning English as an additional language and/or has been identified as having special educational needs. Although these pupils' needs are appropriately identified and they have Individual Education Plans for learning, their difficulties mean that they are unable to make the rapid rate of progress that they require in order to achieve the national averages. A further contributory factor has been the low rate of attendance, with a higher than average number of pupils who do not attend school regularly. The school has taken effective steps to remedy this situation but the impact is yet to be realised. Furthermore, a significant number of pupils are admitted to the school other than at the usual time of starting school, with many of these having no previous schooling, or learning problems that have already been identified by previous schools. However, most of those pupils who complete their primary education at Westminster achieve appropriately and many achieve well.

3. There is scope, however, for the school to do more to improve standards. Although there are systems for tracking the progress that pupils make, this information is not used sufficiently well by the teachers to ensure that pupils of all abilities are guided on what they need to do to improve. Furthermore, more could be done to support those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. For example, in Years 1 to 6, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress although the standards that they attain are very low. Those who are causing concern are identified early and placed on the school's register. They are set clear targets and given good support within lessons. Bilingual pupils who have gained some proficiency in English make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as their monolingual peers. This is not the case with those at early stages of learning English in Years 1 to 6, where there is too little targeted specialist support available. Progress for these pupils slows in lessons and a significant minority do not achieve their full potential because of language barriers. Their main difficulty is with written English which persists even for those with some proficiency in English. This is not to deny the fact that bilingual pupils who have gained proficiency in English are also represented in the category of higher attainers.
4. Children achieve well overall and sometimes very well throughout the Foundation Stage. Although attainment on entry to the Reception classes is well below average, the children are well placed to exceed the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and to reach them in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world and most aspects of physical and creative development. Standards are below average in communication, language and literacy because standards in the writing element are below average and few children write accurately, fluently or independently. Higher-attaining children are well placed to exceed the Early Learning Goals in speaking and listening and in reading. Average-attaining children are well-placed to reach them.
5. Children who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other children in the Nursery and Reception classes because teachers plan work that is very well matched to their levels of English understanding. They also have many opportunities to work with other children who speak their home language and who are fluent in English. The level of support and teachers' understanding of the expectations of children with special educational needs result in high levels of achievement. Teachers and support staff provide activities that ensure an appropriate, very fine balance between support and challenge.
6. While there are still key areas where the pupils' achievements need to be improved and standards raised further, notably in writing, the school's improvement strategy is beginning to take effect. There is a clear commitment to further improvement. The headteacher has raised expectations of the pupils' performance. The teaching teams have responded well to

the increased rigour in the management systems. They have made effective use of opportunities for further professional development and have gained a greater understanding of data analysis, monitoring and evaluation to support improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality have both improved significantly and are both satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels have improved as a result of very good strategies introduced by the school but the level is still below the national average.
- The very good behaviour, the very good relationships and the lack of any form of harassment result in a very good learning environment.
- The excellent assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Whilst the wide range of ethnic backgrounds of pupils and staff, all working harmoniously together, makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development, opportunities are missed in some subjects to promote it further.

Commentary

7. Pupils like their school and arrive in a calm and orderly manner in the mornings. The level of attendance is below the national average but has increased over the last two years as a result of improved school procedures; these include very good monitoring systems and rewards for both individual pupils with good attendance and a whole class competition. The issue of attendance has been raised by the school with the parents but many still take extended holidays to visit families abroad. Whilst the school does not condone this, it is looking at ways to reduce the effect on the pupils' education. Initiatives include providing project work for the children to do whilst abroad which could be shared with other pupils when they return. Whilst most pupils arrive on time there are a few who are frequently late because families do not encourage prompt arrival.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.6
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.

8. Attitudes to learning are positive both in lessons and at playtime. Pupils work sensibly and most are actively involved in their lessons. The very good relationships within the school enable effective paired work to develop improved social and communication skills as well as to support academic achievement. Throughout the school, behaviour is of a high standard and in assemblies, for example, the attitudes and behaviour are excellent. The number of exclusions last year was typical for this type of school; exclusion is only used if other sanctions fail. The improvements in teaching since the last inspection have resulted in better classroom management and behaviour issues do not now affect lessons. The racial harmony within the school is very good and pupils think the school is fair to all pupils. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility within the classroom and by supporting other pupils through the 'buddy' scheme. Overall pupils' confidence and self-esteem is good, although some do find

the language difficulty a barrier to this. Outside lessons, pupils participate well in either organised clubs or their own joint activities on the playground where a variety of activities are available.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	3	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – Any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	36	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	155	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	57	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	36	6	0
Black or Black British - African	28	1	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	0	0

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

9. Pupils develop a very good understanding of themselves and of the world around them. The school has carried out a complete audit of where spiritual development is delivered within curriculum departments and it also fully meets the requirements for a daily collective act of worship. The needs of all faiths are sensitively addressed and reflection is a normal part of school life. The assemblies seen were excellent in both content and delivery. Through these assemblies and the whole-school ethos which is supported by very caring staff, the pupils develop a very good understanding and respect for other people's feelings and beliefs as well as understanding what is right and what is wrong. The school works as a united multi-racial community with staff setting a very good example. Social skills are well developed by the school routines when pupils are well integrated and work well together. Multicultural development is a natural process in the school, with pupils learning from each other through the very good relationships they have with each other. This is enhanced through celebrating events from the various faiths throughout the year as well as by visits into the community. Although there are vibrant wall displays throughout the school, opportunities are missed to fully investigate the art and music from other cultures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides a good level of care.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching, assessment and learning is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has greatly improved the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- There is much effective teaching in Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The pupils are not fully aware of what they need to do to improve in literacy and numeracy.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	11 (24%)	20 (43%)	11 (24%)	1 (2%)	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.

10. As a result of careful monitoring of the effectiveness of the teaching in each class, the headteacher has been successful in improving the quality of learning. The process has entailed considerable redeployment of staff and professional development to ensure that there is an appropriate blend of experience in each year. This strategy has yet to run its full course but there are encouraging signs that the quality of learning is much more consistent and much of the unsatisfactory elements reported in the last inspection have been eliminated. Furthermore, the school has introduced setting arrangements in literacy and numeracy to enable the work set to be pitched more accurately for the different ability groups. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good, with particular strengths in Years 2 and 6 and in the Foundation Stage. However, when the analysis of work is taken into consideration it is clear that the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good. This still represents a significant achievement for the school.
11. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well because of the very high quality teaching, with some excellent features. The adults work as a highly effective team; they know the children very well and cater for their needs very effectively. The provision has greatly improved since the last inspection.
12. The Foundation Stage team has very high expectations of the children's personal and social skills; children work purposefully either in groups or individually. Excellent relationships enable the staff to build on trust to encourage children to undertake challenging tasks. Teachers and support staff understand how children learn and provide a wide range of activities and experiences that are very well matched to individual needs. As most children are learning English as an additional language they benefit from the value placed on their languages and cultures, and, in the majority of cases, from explanations in their home language where necessary. The focus on listening and speaking skills is very well organised and benefits all children including those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language. The planned links between curricular areas ensure that learning experiences are reinforced at every step by each teaching activity. The planned questioning by all of the staff ensures that children's thinking is challenged and their learning is monitored carefully.
13. The deputy headteacher has been deployed to make a detailed analysis of the pupils' progress. The school has developed its assessment procedures so that the staff have a much greater awareness of the pupils' progress and where there are weaknesses in the pupils' understanding. This is beginning to impact on the teachers' planning as they are now much better informed about individual and class achievements in literacy and numeracy. However, this information is still not being used as effectively as it might in planning lessons for different groups of pupils. Furthermore, although the school has introduced a new marking system and

the pupils' work is marked up to date, it is currently used too rigidly and consequently many pupils receive too little help in refining their written language. Furthermore, many pupils are unclear about what they need to do to improve their work. The headteacher recognises that the quality of marking requires further refinement.

14. Pupils are supported well within classrooms by class teachers and a hardworking and effective team of teaching assistants. Class teachers ensure in their lesson plans that appropriate provision is made for pupils with particular learning needs and the teaching assistants provide good, and frequently very good, support for pupils. They monitor pupils' progress during lessons and provide a good blend of sensitive help and challenge. This is particularly evident in the case of those pupils who are learning English as an additional language as well as those pupils with special educational needs.
15. Pupils learning English as an additional language benefit from classroom strategies such as the focus on key vocabulary and repeated explanations employed by their mainstream teachers. This helps the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of different subjects. However, there is a shortage of specific expertise to help the pupils from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds to understand the structures of the English language.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons apart from the sessions when small groups are withdrawn to practise their reading and writing skills. As pupils are placed in ability sets for mathematics, work is planned that is matched to their ability levels in that subject. Those pupils with special educational needs have Individual Education Plans. The targets on these plans are usually clear, comprehensive and achievable. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good support to class teachers to assist with the writing of Individual Education Plans to ensure that they are relevant.

The curriculum

The school's curricular provision is satisfactory overall with some areas for further development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been effectively restructured, though adaptation of Foundation subjects remains to be fully established.
- The role of subject leaders has been developed, but tracking/monitoring of pupils' progress needs further development.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links and creative arts are not well developed.

Commentary

17. The last inspection report was critical of the curriculum with particular reference to its balance, organisation and relevance. The school has addressed most of these issues successfully, reflecting good progress, although the changes put in place have not yet resulted in improved standards. The school has greatly improved its approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. The role of subject leaders, although mainly in the case of core subjects, has been developed, and policies and schemes of work for all subjects including religious education are now in place. Curriculum innovation includes guided reading sessions outside the Literacy Hour, curriculum letters to parents, and parental involvement in their children's education through the well-established 'Inspire' working party.
18. The school has understandably focused on literacy and numeracy in its effort to raise standards. There is now a clear recognition of the need to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in all foundation subjects. As a result, these subjects are currently under review with a working party considering a topic approach and specialist teaching in light of the document 'Excellence and Enjoyment.'

Arrangements for the teaching of religious education are now consistent with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The provision of personal, social and health education that includes citizenship is good. The school meets statutory requirements in respect of sex and relationships education and drugs education. The provision of homework contributes well to the pupils' learning and attainment. This together with the overall provision for pupils learning English as an additional language reflects the inclusive nature of the curriculum, although the issue of embedding good practice in respect of targeted specialist support based on specific needs of individual pupils in English acquisition remains to be addressed fully.

19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They receive good quality support from teaching assistants, particularly in English and mathematics. The Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs state clearly what pupils need to learn in order to make progress and are reviewed regularly. The targets set are generally achievable, realistic, and broken down into small, manageable steps. The school's aim to provide pupils learning English as an additional language with access to the full curriculum including extra-curricular activities is evident in the support being mainly in-class and curriculum related. Resources and displays reflect the celebration of cultural diversity represented by the pupils.
20. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned to provide an exceedingly wide range of interesting, challenging and relevant activities. It is enhanced by a very imaginative range of visits and visitors. All adults are very good role models and establish very good relationships with the children. They work as a very effective team. They monitor all aspects of children's learning and personal and social development very carefully. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and is used very effectively to enhance children's learning. Parents commented very favourably on the provision in all classes and their own involvement in their children's learning. Children in both the Nursery and the Reception classes have continual access to designated areas with a satisfactory range of wheeled and other equipment for each year group. They are used very effectively for many areas of learning, especially physical and mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The headteacher, staff and governors have already identified the benefits that sheltered areas would bring and have made financial provision for this. Members of the Environment Agency are helping the school to develop the outdoor areas.
21. A good range of clubs and activities including residential visits for older pupils enriches the curriculum. However, cross-curricular links remain an area for further development, as does pupils' participation in some aspects of the curriculum such as creative arts.
22. There is a good match of staffing, including support staff, for the delivery of the curriculum. The school's resources and accommodation are satisfactory but the school makes good use of them; this is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage. The attractive and carefully presented displays around the school provide a stimulating environment that impacts positively on the pupils' achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Provision of support advice and guidance is satisfactory. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral care provided by a caring staff is very good.
- Pupils have very good trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- Induction processes are very good for pupils who join at any time during the year.

- Both staff and governors are trained in child protection procedures.
- Risk assessments are carried out but the procedures need to be more detailed to ensure that the assessments are sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

23. The level of care has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The pastoral staff provide very good care for pupils; the health and safety and welfare procedures are satisfactory. The child protection procedures are comprehensive with all staff and all governors having been trained. At present, the responsibility for child protection is shared by the whole governing body and the headteacher is the nominated responsible person. The number of looked-after children varies throughout the year but the school works well with the external agencies to provide effective support. A very high number of pupils joins or leaves the school during the year and the school provides very good care for these pupils to ensure that they develop personally as well as academically. The concern for vulnerable pupils is demonstrated by the school having created a 'nurture room' to provide caring support when it is most needed. Health and safety procedures have been reviewed and contain references to risk assessment but additional detail is required to ensure that assessments are sufficiently rigorous. Supervision throughout the day is good and first-aid provision is satisfactory.
24. Relationships in the school are very good and the teachers know all the pupils well, enabling them to provide good support within lessons. Teachers have good opportunities to provide guidance to pupils during the day as the very good behaviour of the pupils allows registration periods as well as lesson time to be used purposefully. The use of assessment data is at the early stages of development and this restricts how well informed the teachers are in setting individual targets for pupils. The annual progress reports give pupils the opportunity to identify what they have learnt during the year and what they hope to learn next year.
25. When pupils join the school, at whatever point in the school year, they are introduced very well to the school environment and to its procedures. Arrangements are made for parents and pupils to visit the school and meet the class teacher. The school acquires as much background information as possible but this may be very little for some pupils if they have come from abroad and had no previous schooling. The actual process is customised for the individual pupil and may include a parent spending some time in school initially. Those pupils who join during the year are paired with a suitable pupil to help them settle quickly. Nursery and reception children attend initially for half days as a gradual introduction.
26. The school council is fully established and meets regularly. Members of the council helped decide how it operates and it is well organised; minutes of meetings are displayed for all to share and several suggestions have been followed up by the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided to parents about the school is good.
- Parents are given good information about what their children are studying and how to help them.
- The prospectus does not fully meet requirements.

Commentary

27. The parents' questionnaires and comments made at the parents' meeting show that parents are pleased with most aspects of the school which they think has improved significantly over the last two years. They are particularly pleased that staff expect the children to work hard, that the school is well led and managed, that children are encouraged to become mature,

whilst they are treated fairly and helped to settle quickly into the school. Many parents identified that bullying had taken place but none was seen during the inspection and the school's actions seem to have worked well. Similar concerns over behaviour were not confirmed. Other areas of concern were about the information parents receive on progress and the guidance they are given about helping their child at home. The annual progress reports are considered to be satisfactory as they contain all the required information. The school does send out the reports ahead of the parents' meeting where an interpreter can be used to explain them. The information on how to help their children at home is in fact very good with regular curriculum information and well used homework folders. This information, however, is currently not translated into languages other than English.

28. Teachers and all support staff establish very effective links with parents and children before they join both the Nursery and Reception classes; they ensure that children and their parents are comfortable and confident in school routines.
29. Parents are eager and encouraged to share in their children's learning. Parents of children in the Nursery class share in the early morning routines including self-registration and children gain confidence from this activity. Children in all classes regularly take reading books home and parents are given very good guidance on how to help their children learn. Parents are very pleased with the provision in the school and the progress their children make. They receive frequent and detailed information and share in many activities including celebrations. Parents are very well informed about all aspects of their children's learning.
30. The school prospectus is of a good quality and gives parents useful information in a well-presented format. Whilst the school identifies attendance as a concern through its regular newsletters, the attendance figures are not included in the prospectus. The school has just produced its own website although this is not fully operational yet. Parents have been consulted about their views through questionnaires and the school has an open-door policy for parents who have any concerns. A strong feature of the partnership is that all teachers are available on the playground at the end of the day to talk to any parent who wishes to discuss matters about their child. The school has appointed a parent partnership worker to encourage parental involvement and to support parents by providing courses for them within the school premises. A very good initiative called the INSPIRE workshops has been introduced for all year groups where parents can come and work with their children in school on a Friday afternoon and this has been very successful.
31. The school has satisfactory links with the community and pupils benefit from visits into the community and from members of the community coming into school to talk to them. Pupils from Year 6 move to several different secondary schools and because there is no single 'normal' destination school, strong curriculum and transition links have not been developed. The school is aware that this is an area for development but the current Year 6 pupils all know which school they are moving to and did not identify any concerns.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school are satisfactory overall. The management of the school is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and inclusion well.
- The school has addressed the key issues raised in the 2003 inspection well, particularly in improving the quality of teaching.

- The management of special educational needs is good.
- The management of the school's finances and resources is good.
- Subject leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their management roles.

Commentary

32. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The school benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher, a dedicated and enthusiastic staff and a supportive governing body. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has inspired the transformation of the school. She has a very clear vision and high aspirations for the school and has worked strenuously to improve the overall quality of provision and the pupils' achievements. From a period of many changes to the overall management structure, including very recently the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, she has now created an effective senior leadership team which has a very clear agenda for further improvements. The priorities identified in the school's development plan are entirely appropriate and are closely linked to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The staff and governors feel fully consulted in the strategic development of the school. Together they have been successful in developing a climate where there is a strong professional focus on valuing each individual member of the school community and a continuing emphasis on improvement. Their leadership is effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the full inclusion of pupils from all abilities and backgrounds.
33. Since the last inspection the school has rightly placed considerable energy into improving the overall quality of teaching and provision in order to raise standards. This has largely been successful, although the impact of many of these changes has not yet had time to be fully realised in terms of raising pupils' achievements. Improvements have also been made in other key areas for development identified in the last inspection, particularly with regard to improving provision in the Foundation Stage which is now of a very good standard. The school has improved the curriculum and plans further initiatives to ensure a greater focus on the arts and cross-curricular links. As many of the curriculum leaders are new to their posts they have not yet had sufficient opportunities to fully evaluate and improve provision in their subjects.
34. However, the Foundation Stage team leader provides very good leadership and management and is an excellent role model for her colleagues. She provides a careful balance of guidance, encouragement and support at the same time as ensuring that statutory requirements are fully met and assessment is rigorous and up to date. She monitors planning and assessments and is aware of the needs of individuals as well as groups of children. She monitors children's progress and supports teachers very well.
35. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a thorough awareness of the range of needs within the school. Where the pupils receive support within lessons, this is of good quality. The co-ordinator keeps well-documented evidence and records. The progress of the pupils is carefully monitored and arrangements are reviewed regularly and adjustments to provision made accordingly.
36. The governing body has been restructured since the last inspection, establishing a committee structure. Governors are supportive of the school and their recent extensive training is enabling them to develop their role, including that of critical friend, more successfully. They receive regular presentations from teachers about curriculum innovation, for example, and so have a satisfactory knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although they still rely too heavily on information given to them by the headteacher.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,394,344	Balance from previous year	151,714
Total expenditure	1,272,949	Balance carried forward to the next	273,109
Expenditure per pupil	2,873		

37. The school's finances are efficiently managed by the experienced bursar and the headteacher. The governing body has a finance sub-committee which meets regularly and receives good information from the school. The day-to-day financial management is good and updated software packages have been introduced. The best value principle is well used in the school and supported by the governing body. An example of best value is the use of an external firm of surveyors to manage the building and maintenance contracts where the school can demonstrate good cost savings and a good service. Specific funds are spent appropriately and thorough monitoring and evaluation have been used to direct money to departments. Spending is now linked to the development plan and therefore to raising standards. The increased carry-forward this year is because planned activities were not completed before the end of the financial year but funds have clearly been allocated appropriately. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school provides very well for all children in all classes in the Foundation Stage; they make a flying start to their school career.

Much closer links have been established between the Nursery and Reception classes since the last inspection; the Foundation Stage leader has very successfully developed a Foundation Team which has been rigorous and very successful in establishing a corporate and shared philosophy. The staff, by working together, now ensure highly effective planning to meet the needs of all children. Social interaction between the Nursery and Reception is very good and planning ensures a smoother transfer from the Nursery to the Reception classes than at the previous inspection. Since the appointment of the team leader, the school has successfully and methodically ensured that the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed rigorously and successfully yet in a caring way. This has brought enjoyment and excellence to children's learning allied to rigorous progression in small manageable steps closely matched to the Stepping Stones.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, with some excellent features. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Children are very well prepared for transfer to Year 1. There are one Nursery class and two Reception classes; most children in the Nursery class attend for either a morning or afternoon session while the others attend full time. Standards on entry to the Reception class are well below average. Children achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and curricular planning. All staff ensure that the precise learning needs of all children are identified early through very good assessment systems and very effective links with families. The children, including higher-attaining children, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well overall.

Many aspects contribute to the vastly improved provision since the last inspection. The curriculum is challenging and interesting yet ensures progression of a wide range of skills. It is planned to meet the wide ranging abilities and needs of different children; the different languages spoken at home and the wide ranging needs on entry are very well planned for and accommodated. Each child is valued and is successfully encouraged to share in the rich variety of activities which are planned throughout each day. Assessment for each stage of learning for each child is rigorous and small steps to success are not only celebrated but recorded. These detailed yet easily accessible records are used by teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants when planning the next steps that children take in order to ensure progression yet retain confidence in learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very well planned activities and resources increase children's independence and their ability to work in groups.
- Very good teamwork ensures that all children achieve very well.
- Children make very good progress throughout each year and between the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Teachers plan an exceptionally enriching range of special events and these contribute to children's very good understanding of the cultures, faiths and customs of people in multi-faith Britain.
- The welcome given to parents encourages them to share in the early morning routines with their children in the Nursery.

Commentary

38. The staff work as a very cohesive and effective team and children are introduced sensitively but thoroughly to classroom routines and working in groups. The staff plan activities which interest children and ensure that they achieve very well. They take time to talk to the children and use praise very effectively to raise their self-esteem. They give sensitive reminders about behaviour. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Teachers, the nursery nurses and teaching assistants set very good examples to children. In the Reception classes, children build on their previous knowledge of class routines and are given more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers ensure that all children have a very good balance between guided activities and a wide range of choices. This makes an excellent contribution to all aspects of their personal development. This is an excellent aspect of the provision as children of all abilities develop socially as well as academically. Many children are well placed to exceed their early learning goals in this area. In lessons, the adults ensure that children are purposefully involved. They use these opportunities for rigorous monitoring of attainment, achievement, attitudes and behaviour. From the calendar of celebrations and special events, children share in many celebrations from a wide range of cultures and religions. They are very well prepared for life in multicultural and multi-faith Britain.
39. During milk and snack time, children are very secure in class and group routines because of excellent consistency and very good relationships. Children are given a wide range of responsibilities that develop their collaborative and negotiating skills.
40. During nurture group activities, children successfully develop skills in collaborating, taking turns and sharing. These very well planned events contribute to developing cross-cultural friendships and children's collaborative skills. Very good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and have barriers to learning ensures that they are very well included in all activities. Children identify key foods which are part of a healthy diet.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with many excellent features, and is very carefully focused towards developing children's language skills in all activities.
- The teaching of reading is very good and children's speaking and listening skills are very well promoted through all areas of learning.
- The curricular planning, the assessment systems and use of assessments to guide planning are very good.
- Children take reading books home and teachers help parents to help their children at home.
- Teachers make very effective use of a barely satisfactory range of reading books.
- Standards in writing are below average.

Commentary

41. Most children quickly adapt to the routines and exciting activities in the Nursery. They listen to and participate in a wealth of stories and songs. Most children speak with confidence, listen carefully and are very enthusiastic learners.
42. In the Reception class, children achieve very well and most children are well placed to reach the expected levels in speaking and listening and reading. Higher-attaining children reach high standards in all aspects. Standards are below average for most children in the writing aspects of this area of learning. Children achieve very well, considering that the majority enter the Reception class with well below average standards in this area of learning. The higher- and average-attaining children read fluently and accurately with good understanding as the

books chosen are well matched to their abilities and interests. Lower-attaining children speak about each picture and respond to questions which need one-word answers. Most children who speak English as an additional language read familiar vocabulary well and they benefit from the repetition of familiar words and using books with illustrations. Children enjoy books and speak with interest and understanding about their favourite stories. Children are very enthusiastic about reading and eagerly take their books home every night. Most parents listen to their children read. The teachers make very effective use of a satisfactory range of reading books which they plan to expand in the near future.

43. Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak, and all adults listen and respond to their comments. In the Reception class, the teachers have developed very rigorous and tightly structured plans for the teaching of sounds. Most children are therefore able to say the sounds, recognise them in books and practise them during writing activities. They are encouraged to hold pencils with the correct grip but writing is the area where many children do not achieve the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching overall.
- Teachers plan an exciting range of activities which ensures that children understand number and apply their skills to other areas of learning.
- Children have very positive attitudes to this area of learning and apply mathematical skills with confidence.

Commentary

44. Children achieve very well due to very good teaching and assessment in all classes. Most teachers have excellent understanding of how children acquire mathematical skills and give them an exciting range of challenging work. The majority of children reach the expected levels in all aspects of number, shape and space and problem solving. They count to 20 in English, Punjabi, Urdu and Somali. They have very good understanding of place value and describe the key properties of a wide range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Many children have good understanding of addition and subtraction using numbers to ten. They construct and interpret bar charts accurately.
45. All teachers have very high expectations and successfully develop children's confidence and make learning exciting and relevant to them. Children apply mathematics to most areas of learning; they are encouraged to look for patterns and shape in art and in knowledge and understanding of the world. ICT is very successfully incorporated into this area of learning to develop children's understanding of number. Very effective class activities at the end of the lessons give children opportunities to demonstrate their new learning and also consolidate mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults plan a very enriching range of interesting activities.
- Children have very good opportunities for using computers.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very wide range of visits and visitors.
- Very effective use is made of the outdoor accommodation.

Commentary

46. All aspects of teaching and learning were very good in the activities observed. Children are very interested and enthusiastic learners and achieve well in all aspects. They use construction kits to design a wide range of vehicles and buildings. Most children understand the differences between living and non-living things and know the conditions needed for growth. In the Nursery, all children recognise a wide range of fruit and vegetables including tomatoes and cucumbers and know that if the seeds are planted and cared for they would grow into plants. During the inspection they made rotis and chapattis and filled them with vegetables and cheese; this activity contributed to their personal and social development and their developing understanding of a healthy diet.
47. Children in the Reception class classify living things according to a wide range of criteria such as plants, animals and birds. They understand that living things breathe, move and feed. They understand the value of a healthy diet and explain which foods are beneficial for them. They use magnifying glasses to examine small creatures and describe them in detail. Most children have good ICT skills and use listening centres, overhead projectors and select computer programs using very good mouse skills. They match animal puppets to silhouettes.
48. The very well planned range of investigations develops children's learning very well. Children know that switches control a wide range of machines, for example computers, CD players and washing machines.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high quality curricular planning and teaching contribute to high levels of achievement throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Very effective use is made of the satisfactory outdoor provision and resources for both year groups.

Commentary

49. During the inspection, children in the Nursery showed very high levels of co-ordination when they used the wheeled equipment in the outdoor area. The children are very well included in all activities; gifted and talented and higher-attaining children have extra challenges and those with barriers to learning and English as an additional language benefit from support when necessary. These lessons contribute very well to children's personal and social development.
50. Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes and scissors with very good levels of dexterity and accuracy. Very good teaching of early handwriting skills, especially with the emphasis on shapes, curves and holding pencils correctly, contributes to high levels of achievement. Very well planned use of the outdoor accommodation ensures that all areas of the curriculum can be accessed outside. Teachers have very high expectations of children's achievement in all areas. Most children in the Reception classes are well placed to reach the expected levels in all aspects apart from handwriting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of exciting activities in all aspects of this area of learning.
- Children use a very wide range of media and develop confidence and a wide range of skills in the use of colour, texture and shape.
- Children have many opportunities for singing and playing musical instruments.

Commentary

51. Children gain confidence and achieve well in using an increasingly wide range of resources because of very good teaching and curricular planning. They use a wide variety of materials to create pictures and models with a good feel for texture and shape. Children develop painting skills very effectively; they painted vases of flowers showing good proportion and detail of the stems, leaves and petals. They drew houses in detail and position roofs, windows and doors accurately. Children develop speaking and listening skills well as they discuss the materials used and compare designs.
52. They use paint programs in ICT to generate a wide range of pictures. During the planned and informal music activities, children sang enthusiastically and played a wide range of percussion instruments with accurate rhythm.
53. From the lessons observed, displays and discussions with children, most of them are well placed to reach the expected levels in most aspects of this area, particularly the artistic and musical elements. Although children have abundant opportunities for using the role-play areas and enjoy working in groups, they are not well placed to achieve the expected levels in the creative use of vocabulary and independent conversation. They negotiate well and often rely on adult input. Planning shows that over the year, children have a very wide range of creative opportunities. All staff encourage children to speak and use their imagination in a wide range of activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the last inspection.
- Standards are well below average in reading and writing.
- Literacy lessons are taught consistently.
- There is a good emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in speaking and listening.
- Marking is not used effectively to help the pupils to improve their writing.

Commentary

54. The headteacher has made standards in literacy a priority area and has introduced a number of strategies to improve standards. This is because recent national test results for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 have shown the pupils' performance to be in the lowest five per cent nationally in recent years. Standards in writing have been particularly low. The school has changed its approach to the teaching of reading and as a result standards are clearly improving in Year 2 and in Year 6 although this improvement is not yet reflected in national test results. There is now a much greater emphasis on speaking and listening. However,

there remain weaknesses in the approach to the development of writing skills and current standards are too low.

55. A key element of the school's strategy for raising standards in English is the emphasis placed on speaking and listening. In every class, the pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups. This practice is a common feature not only in English lessons but also in other subject areas. This strongly encourages the pupils to develop their vocabulary and raises their confidence to communicate their ideas in writing. However, standards in speaking, and to a lesser extent in listening, are below average throughout the school. Although the school provides much carefully targeted support for those pupils on the special educational needs register, the challenges presented by the high level of pupil mobility and the high percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language remain.
56. The school has only recently implemented the National Literacy Strategy and consequently the full impact is yet to be realised. The subject manager has ensured that reading is taught systematically on a daily basis and this approach has resulted in clear signs that standards are improving. Assessment is used accurately to ensure that the pupils are reading at the appropriate level and that there is a good range of books available to them. Adult support is used effectively and in the best lessons, notably in Year 2, the pupils are gaining confidence and are highly motivated to improve. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils are developing their reference skills and are making good use of information and communication technology to practise locating information efficiently.
57. Standards in writing are too low throughout the school. This is because not enough attention has been given to the basic skills of literacy. Too many pupils in each year group repeat basic errors of punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting. The school has introduced a marking system that rightly concentrates on assessing each pupil's understanding of the planned learning objective for each lesson. However, in most cases, the result has been that many basic errors remain uncorrected. It is clear that the pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their writing in literacy lessons. For example, the pupils in Year 6 word-processed a series of articles in the style of the front page of a newspaper, describing the mystery of the missing headteacher. These stories were well constructed and met the criteria of the exercise. However, many opportunities are missed for the pupils to refine their skills and to extend their range of vocabulary through writing reports in other subjects. Furthermore, there has been too little emphasis on ensuring that the pupils present their work with fluent well-formed handwriting and consequently standards of presentation are low.
58. The teachers have developed their questioning skills well and this encourages the pupils to explain their reasoning and to develop their speaking. There was a good focus on speaking and listening in many of the lessons observed. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good, with particularly effective teaching in Years 2 and 6. This is a marked improvement on the last inspection. The lessons showed good planning with clear learning objectives and a good adherence to the National Literacy Strategy. In each lesson the teachers maintained good class control and ensured that the pupils remained on task. The teaching was characterised by good pace and work set that was well matched to the different ability groups in each class. However, an analysis of the pupils' work over the last academic year shows that these good features are not consistent. All too often the teachers set and accepted work that was substandard. Furthermore, much of the assessment does not involve the pupils sufficiently and they lack a clear idea of what they need to do in order to improve. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good.
59. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. There are good signs that there is now a greater sense of urgency in the management of the subject and that the issues and related strategies identified in the current three-years action plan are appropriate. Setting arrangements have been introduced in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 and the school now has more sophisticated means for tracking the pupils' progress. The co-ordinator recognises that the rigour with which the data is analysed and the impact of the strategies monitored will be crucial to the raising of achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills, particularly word processing, in writing and in using the Internet for research, although these opportunities are not yet sufficiently well structured within teachers' medium-term planning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the last inspection.
- Although pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment, standards are well below average at the end of Year 2. They are below average at the end of Year 6.
- Marking is not always used sufficiently well to help pupils improve.
- Assessment targets are not always shared with the pupils so that they are aware of what they need to do next in their learning.

Commentary

61. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average. Although they make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, they are in line to achieve standards that are well below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6 standards are likely to be below average. This would indicate an improvement over the results in the 2004 national tests, when the standards achieved were very low by the end of Year 6.
62. Since the last inspection, pupils' overall achievements in the national tests at the end of both key stages have remained stubbornly low. Several factors contribute to the overall lower than average standards; there is a higher than average level of pupil mobility and percentage of pupils for whom English is not the first language. Although, overall, these pupils make satisfactory progress, as a result of their difficulties, many are unable to make the rapid rate of progress that they require in order to achieve the national averages. The school was also initially slow to implement the National Numeracy Strategy so that there was a lack of consistency in the teaching of mathematics and in the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This has now been rectified and, together with the subsequent training for teachers, has increased their confidence in teaching the subject. In order to improve standards, the school has adopted setting arrangements so that work can be more closely planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. These improvements are beginning to have an impact on raising standards, although the older pupils have not had sufficient time to benefit fully from these initiatives.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some strong teaching particularly in Year 6. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved overall and is now satisfactory over time. However, as at the time of the last inspection there is variation in the quality of teaching across the school which ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Planning is clearly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. In the most effective lessons, teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject; this is reflected in the brisk pace and the careful development of strategies which ensure that pupils understand one process before moving on in their learning. In these lessons, the teachers' levels of questioning and discussion are challenging and take the pupils' learning forward well. There is very good use of a range of strategies that engage the interest of the pupils, and tasks given are interesting and appropriate. The oral and mental sessions are used well and engage the interest of the pupils and present appropriate challenges. In the less effective lessons, there is a lack of a clear staged approach in

developing pupils' learning as the teachers do not ensure that pupils fully understand or have the necessary skills to enable them to carry out their work or tasks and make progress. Teachers' planning and pupils' past work indicate that teachers have worked hard to ensure that all aspects of mathematics are taught. There is now clear evidence that pupils have opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems and find patterns and sequences in numbers. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

64. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given appropriate praise. Marking usually makes reference to the success in meeting the lesson's learning objectives but does not give sufficient direction on how to improve. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has sound procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and standardised tests. This information is now being used to track the achievements of pupils and to set targets for groups of pupils. However, the targets that are set are not used specifically enough to give individuals a clear picture of how they are progressing or how to develop their work in the future. The presentation of pupils' work is generally satisfactory and good in those classes where teachers insist on high standards. Those pupils with special educational needs receive good support from the teaching assistants who now play a greater part in the lessons and are clear about the lessons' objectives.
65. The subject co-ordinator is very new to the school and has not yet had time to carry out her duties within the few weeks that she has been in post. The subject has been well led and managed since the last inspection and has brought about significant improvements to provision. The school is currently developing further strategies to monitor and evaluate standards and find out any common weaknesses in order to improve achievement. Homework remains a weakness; it is not consistently set and therefore does not support pupils' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. The pupils have few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science and geography. As at the time of the last inspection there are too few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with a strong emphasis on investigative work.
- The leadership and management are effective.
- Standards of attainment are below average.
- There are some inconsistencies in matching tasks to the full ability range.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment in tracking/monitoring of pupils' progress.

Commentary

67. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average, with a minority of higher-attainers working at above average levels. This is broadly consistent with the 2004 national test results, though the performance of seven-year-olds was poor then. The overall good improvement since the last inspection, evident especially at the higher Level 3 for seven-year-olds and Level 5 for eleven-year-olds, is attributed to effective leadership in reviewing the scheme of work with focus on investigative learning and promoting staff

development and the use of appropriate resources. Limited proficiency in English prevents a

significant minority of pupils from achieving their full potential in science, although no significant gender or ethnic difference has been noted in their learning.

68. Pupils currently in Year 6 have started investigating how they see with their eyes, but many are unsure of what different parts of the eye are called. By the time they are aged seven, younger pupils show a developing awareness of an electrical device not working without batteries or with a break in the circuit. However, they have difficulty explaining their work unaided. Pupils in Year 4 know that some solids dissolve in water to give solutions, but some pupils show a lack of clear understanding of the task while some are unaware of the rate of change relating to different materials used in their experiment such as salt, sugar and coffee. Throughout the school, the pupils' skills in observation and independent recording are not fully developed.
69. The teaching observed was good and occasionally had some very good features – another area of improvement since the last inspection. Effective questioning, rooted in very good subject knowledge, promotes learning. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on investigative learning and the use of appropriate resources that enhance pupils' motivation, although the practice of matching activities to pupils' abilities lacks consistency. Pupils throughout the school respond to investigative work with a great deal of enthusiasm, and those with special educational needs and/ or English as an additional language benefit from a hands-on approach. Most pupils show good standards of behaviour and good collaborative skills. This contributes to their progress and achievement in developing and consolidating scientific knowledge, understanding and skills both in lessons and over time, although their attainment leaves room for improvement.
70. A modified science scheme focused on skills, especially that of investigation, has enabled the school to raise the subject profile since the last inspection. There is evidence of some cross-curricular links – with mathematics, for example and activities covering different aspects of science make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The subject is well led and managed. For example, the subject leader has been pro-active with her professional development and supportive of her colleagues. The need to use information and communication technology for promoting learning in science, another issue raised in the last report, has been addressed. Whilst good assessment procedures are in place, she has identified the need for more effective use of assessment in tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, with particular reference to those with learning difficulties.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are making satisfactory progress.
- The school does not make enough use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
- The staff have improved their level of expertise.
- Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

Commentary

71. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below the levels expected. The pupils are now making satisfactory progress because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon developing pupils' skills. The school's commitment to training all staff has led to increased confidence. There is a willingness to use the information and communication technology suite to ensure that the basic skills are taught systematically and the programme is working well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are

well supported. However, opportunities to use the classroom computers to extend the pupils' understanding in other subjects are missed.

72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The development of the teachers' expertise and knowledge in this subject has been well managed and this has enabled the resources to be used to good effect. For example, the computer suite is carefully timetabled to enable pupils to have regular access to computers. This enables all of the necessary skills to be taught systematically. In one good lesson on search engines, the teacher had high expectations of the work the pupils were going to produce. She gave clear guidance on the use of the Internet, so that the pupils were clear about the aims of the lesson. All of the pupils were involved and were very enthusiastic about the task. The teacher's explanations and instructions were clear and she was very well supported by the teaching assistant. When the pupils found difficulties with the process these were dealt with quickly. This meant that the pupils were kept busy and involved in their work. These factors, together with the quality of the relationships, which enabled the pupils to feel comfortable about sharing their mistakes, created a successful, positive learning environment.
73. The school has a satisfactory number of computers for the number of pupils and most other resources are readily available. Although simple assessment procedures have been introduced to provide staff with clear information about each pupil's progress, the subject manager recognises that more use could be made of the data to pitch the work more accurately for the different ability levels in each class. There is a clear and appropriate vision of how standards in information and communication technology should be raised and how its use in other subjects will be achieved. The improvement made since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. The school is making limited use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. There is little consistency in the practice and the school recognises that this is an area for development. For example, in Year 6, the pupils word-processed their writing when practising their use of more complex sentences, but in most cases they were merely making fair copies of their text. As a result of a recent investment in a set of laptop computers, groups of pupils are beginning to carry out research in geography and history, but there is little consistent planning for the use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **in line with expectations** of the locally agreed syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Multi-faith school community.
- Enhanced staff knowledge, although teacher resources are barely satisfactory.
- Limited written work.
- Limited opportunity for visits to places of worship.
- Some older pupils miss religious education lessons.

Commentary

75. No Year 6 lesson was observed, but evidence, including work sampling and discussions with pupils and staff suggests that most eleven-year-olds have a broad understanding of beliefs and practices associated with major world religions. For example, they have studied Sikhism with reference to the Ten Gurus and the importance of the five Ks to the Sikh community.

Seven-year-olds have started identifying aspects of religious celebrations such as Diwali. This was observed in an activity focused on retelling the story of Rama and Sita. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the five pillars of Islam were reflected in a Year 5 lesson that involved a range of activities including research involving the Internet and presentation of facts. Older pupils demonstrate a relatively better awareness of major religions. There is no significant gender or ethnic difference in pupils' learning in the subject, although their written work is limited – an issue identified in the previous report and presentation is not always tidy.

76. Teaching observed generally reflected good, and occasionally very good, subject knowledge. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Activities are well planned with focus on key vocabulary and the use of appropriate resources, though the full ability range of pupils is not always taken into account. The oral focus enhances pupil participation. They respond positively showing respect for religions other than their own. They are well behaved and relate to one another and their teacher with care and sensitivity. They collaborate well, though progress tends to slow for some, when left to work unsupervised.
77. The programme of religious activities is consistent with the requirements of the agreed syllabus, though some older pupils miss some lessons owing to a timetable clash. It reflects a particular focus on Christianity in response to the previous report. Assembly themes and celebrations make a good contribution to pupils' religious awareness. Religious topics and stories also make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is evidence of some cross-curricular links - with literacy, for example. Resources include the use of Internet, but teachers' resources need upgrading. Visits to places of worship remain an area for further development, and there is little formal assessment in the subject, though self-assessment is being promoted. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader, though new to post, demonstrates a clear awareness of what needs to be developed further.
78. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in history and a limited number of lessons in geography. Inspection findings are based on the small number of lessons seen in geography, the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.
79. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in geography are likely to be below the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is largely because most pupils have had too few opportunities in the past to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding at sufficient depth. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. However, since then the school has made some modifications to its provision to try to ensure that the subject is more relevant and meets the needs of the pupils. As this review is not yet complete, there remain some areas of the curriculum which are not appropriate for the pupils who lack the basic skills and knowledge to enable them to make progress. For example, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils in Year 2 were making comparisons of life at the seaside both in the past and present. Most pupils found this difficult as they had never visited the seaside and therefore had little prior knowledge or experiences on which to base their learning. Since the last inspection the school has developed its planning based on national guidance (QCA), to ensure the progressive development of geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
80. Pupils in Year 2 have contrasted life in Struay with that in Birmingham. They have identified the countries of the United Kingdom on maps. In Year 6 pupils appreciate that there are differences between developing countries and Britain, through the study of the Indian village of Chembakoli and describe some of the differences in daily life there and their own. They have studied the water cycle and the physical features of rivers. As pupils are usually given the same tasks to complete, it is not possible to judge how well pupils of different abilities achieve.

81. Although it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching, it was satisfactory in two of the lessons and good in one. In the more effective lesson, the teacher enabled the pupils to develop and apply their previous knowledge and enquiry skills when contrasting life in Chembakoli with Birmingham. She engaged them well in their learning through good discussion and questioning and tasks that were both challenging and maintained pupils' interest through the good use of resources.
82. In **history**, earlier work indicates that by the age of seven, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of major events in previous times in their study of the Great Fire of London. They learn about famous people from the past such as Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. Older pupils broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills satisfactorily in their studies of World War Two and aspects of domestic life in those times.
83. As no lessons were seen it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. However, from the evidence of pupils' earlier work it would appear that learning is satisfactory.
84. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for geography in addition to her role as co-ordinator for history which she manages satisfactorily. She recognises the need to review the planning for both subjects to ensure that these are more appropriate for the pupils' needs and to integrate cross-curricular opportunities more successfully. Resources for both subjects are adequate to deliver the curriculum. They have improved for geography since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. Only three lessons were observed in physical education, two in art and design and none in music or design technology; for these reasons no overall judgements have been made about provision, standards, teaching or achievement. Additional evidence was gained from the displays in classrooms and discussions with pupils.
86. In **art and design**, the attractive displays of work indicate that pupils acquire a wide range of skills and use a good variety of media. They study and incorporate art and design from a wide range of cultures and work in the style of many artists. Outstanding features include:-
- patterns inspired by a range of artists;
 - very high quality drawings of plants and flowers;
 - paintings and collage in the style of Mondrian;
 - creative use of texture and tone.
87. Although there is a satisfactory scheme of work which follows national guidelines, the subject is not yet enriched by a wide range of visits or visitors. The recently appointed subject leader has plans to enrich pupils' experiences and already takes an after-school art club.
88. Neither music lessons nor singing in assembly were observed during the inspection and therefore no judgements have been made on standards or achievement in **music**. Some pupils have opportunities for instrumental tuition and sing in the school choir. The scheme of work planned meets statutory requirements and gives a progression of skills in composition, performance and knowledge and understanding of the different styles of music. The recently appointed subject leader has only been in post for a short time and therefore has not had the opportunity to make an impact on the subject.
89. In **design and technology**, the school uses national guidelines as the basis for its work so that there is an assured progression of skills. Pupils have many opportunities to design, make and evaluate their work. During the inspection, effective cross-curricular planning for the subject during an art lesson developed pupils' understanding of the requirement for identifying a need, making an initial design, collecting samples of materials to be used and evaluating their effectiveness for the purpose.

90. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about standards and provision in **physical education**. From discussions, curricular planning and lessons observed the provision for swimming, indoor athletics and sports days at a local park are particular strengths. During the inspection, pupils achieved very well during indoor athletics activities due to very good teaching and challenges; warm-up and cool-down activities were very well handled and pupils understood the importance of these activities as essential aspects of physical education. Most pupils achieved very well in a wide range of jumps over distance as well as height and were eager to improve on their personal best. The success criteria for each award were clearly displayed and there was great joy as pupils progressed from one level to the next. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was very good; particular strengths were teachers' subject knowledge and their teaching of specific techniques which enhanced pupils' agility and therefore levels of success.
91. The subject leader has been in post for a very short time but already has developed a well-considered range of priorities. In most of the lessons observed all aspects of pupils' personal, social, spiritual and moral development were very well promoted. At present, the requirements of the dance activities are not consistently well understood by all teachers and this resulted in some pupils neither warming up nor cooling down appropriately nor achieving high enough standards.
92. The subject leaders for each of these subjects have been very recently appointed. Already they have plans and enthusiasm for enriching the quality of pupils' learning. They are aware of the need for whole-school monitoring and support to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve well and are challenged. They also plan to ensure a richer variety of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and multicultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) that includes citizenship is good. Activities range from an exploration of pupils' feelings and emotions in Years 1 and 2 to peer mediation and a citizenship project involving Year 6 pupils visiting Westminster as part of a local 'Young People's Parliament'. There is a good focus on advice and guidance on how to keep safe and healthy, in addition to exploring ideas of general wellbeing. The provision also includes sex education and growing-up, and is supported by well-developed policies. Other topics relate to raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of misusing drugs, what the work of adults like the school secretary entails and how people like Martin Luther King can make a difference. At the whole-school level, assemblies draw attention to organisations like the United Nations while the school council enables pupils to take responsibilities and develop ideas about society and democracy. The school council offers pupils a voice in the school and demonstrates that their views and suggestions are valued. There is some evidence of pupils' attention also being drawn to issues of global citizenship such as the Asian Tsunami.
94. The quality of teaching and learning of PSHE and citizenship issues is good. Careful planning of activities often engages and keeps the interest of pupils as well as developing their knowledge and skills. Good use is made of visits and visitors. Staff and peer mediators have received appropriate training. Monitoring is fairly strong, and formal assessment has been identified as an area for development. All of this reflects enthusiastic leadership and management, although the co-ordinator is new to post.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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