

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OUR LADY OF LOURDES RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stonebridge, London

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101545

Headteacher: Mrs M Waterhouse

Lead inspector: John Brennan

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 December 2004

Inspection number: 270911

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	286
School address:	Wesley Road Stonebridge London
Postcode:	NW10 8PP
Telephone number:	020 8961 5037
Fax number:	020 8963 1197
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Pompilis
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady of Lourdes is a larger than average Catholic primary school situated in an inner city area of London of considerable social deprivation. The area is currently undergoing regeneration and movement in and out has increased pupil mobility since the last inspection. This means that a considerable number of pupils have a fragmented experience of education. Half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well above average. Forty per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is also well above average. Fifty pupils have social and emotional needs, many of which are complex. As a result of this the school is part of the On Track Project and a Positive Behaviour Programme, aimed at supporting pupils' complex needs, their families and the school. A slightly smaller number of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and there are further smaller groups of pupils with speech and communication needs and several children with individual health needs. Pupils are drawn from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. The largest proportion is from Black African countries, and comprises nearly half of the school's population. The next largest group is pupils with black Caribbean origin, with a smaller proportion of pupils having a white British background. A few pupils come from various European countries, including Eastern Europe and from South America. A very small number of pupils are of an Asian background.

The proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English is high. However, although many start school speaking little English, several are proficient in their own language. Almost ten per cent of the pupils are Travellers and a small number of pupils come from families seeking asylum. All of this makes for a complex attainment and cultural mix on entry to school. Currently, attainment on entry is below that normally expected. In particular children's social and personal skills are well below those typically found. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, especially in relation to social and emotional needs, and in the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Personal, social and health education
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector	
1963	Sibani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	Art and design English Design and technology Special educational needs
25203	Robert Cooke	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
2756	Mike Barron	Team Inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a satisfactory school.** Determined leadership has seen the school through a potentially unsettling period in which many experienced staff left the school. The success of this can be seen in the very positive attitudes pupils have to school and their good behaviour. Standards reach the national averages in Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs or who are at the early stages of learning English achieve well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The vision, compassion and teamwork of the headteacher and her staff ensure that the school is ambitious for the future and operates as a calm and harmonious community.
- Teaching and achievement are stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 and the Nursery. However, throughout the school marking does not help pupils improve.
- Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) exceed expectations in Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving more.
- The celebration of pupils' cultural heritage and the close attention given to their social and moral development ensure that pupils have very positive attitudes to school and themselves.
- Good provision is made for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those who have special educational needs; provision for pupils with emotional needs is very good.
- The school gives great consideration to pupils' and parents' views.
- Many subject co-ordinators and senior staff are at the early stages of developing and using the skills needed to take the school forward.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Despite admitting more pupils who have special educational needs or who are at the early stages of learning English, the school has maintained standards in English and mathematics. Standards in writing, a weakness noted in the last inspection, have improved but standards in science have slipped. Good systems are in place for co-ordinators to monitor the work of the school but many co-ordinators are new and are yet to develop the skills needed to be fully effective. There has been a modest improvement in attendance. The curriculum and provision for pupils' personal development have improved. Provision in the Foundation Stage is not as strong as it was. Governance has improved.

### 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	C	D	B
mathematics	E	D	D	B
science	E*	E	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. E\* - in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupil achievement is satisfactory. From a below average base, children in the Foundation Stage make steady progress. Although many are on course to reach the expected learning goals for children of this age, a significant minority are likely to fall short. Achievement in personal and social development is better in Reception than in the Nursery. Satisfactory achievement in Years 1 and 2 results in standards in Year 2 that are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although national test results for 2004 were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics, they were average when compared to similar schools in reading and

above average in writing and mathematics. Good achievement in Years 3 to 6 leads to standards in Year 6 that meet expectations in English, mathematics and science. Results in the national tests of 2004 were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Compared to similar schools, they were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, achieve well in ICT to reach standards that exceed those normally found in Year 6. Satisfactory achievement in history leads to pupils reaching expected levels in Year 6. It was not possible to judge standards in other subjects. Throughout the school, higher attaining pupils are capable of more. Due to the very good partnerships teachers establish with learning support staff, those who are at the early stages of learning English achieve and those who have special educational needs achieve well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

The provision for **pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for themselves and others. They behave well and are very well prepared for life in multi-cultural Britain. Despite the school's very strong procedures for attendance, rates are low and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education**. Although the curriculum is well organised and added to by a good range of trips and clubs, **the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory**. Concentration on basic skills is working well. Teaching is of a better quality in Years 3 to 6 than elsewhere in the school because teachers are better at managing pupils, teaching the whole class and making learning interesting. Some teaching in Years 1 and 2, borne out of inexperience, has more difficulty in engaging all pupils so pupils do not always work as well as they might. The very good quality of help pupils receive when they are working in groups ensures that pupils work well on these occasions. This is the main reason why pupils who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English do well. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although learning in the Nursery can at times be hectic because the teacher is not consistent in what she expects of the children. Throughout the school, work for higher attaining pupils can, at times, be too easy. Good assessment systems are undermined by weaknesses in marking which do not show pupils what they could do to improve. There are very good relationships between parents and school and the school works well with the local community. Very good care is taken of pupils, who have a strong voice in how the school should develop.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is good**. Very effective leadership by the headteacher has succeeded in creating a strong sense of common purpose, a drive to succeed and a very positive ethos. New staff have been helped to settle to school well and management structures have been rebuilt. However, many staff are inexperienced in management and although they have made a good start in acquiring these skills much remains to be done. Good governance has a strong say in how the school should move on from here and ensures that statutory duties are fulfilled.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and express considerable satisfaction with its work. They feel the school has continued to run smoothly through recent changes.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching in Years 1 and 2 and in the Nursery.
- Equip co-ordinators and senior staff with the skills needed to implement the school's very good systems for monitoring and evaluating performance.
- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are consistently given work that challenges them.

- Improve the quality of marking.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Overall achievement is satisfactory and pupils attain average standards. Achievement is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in Reception achieve well in their personal and social development.
- Satisfactory achievement, from a below average base, results in pupils reaching average standards in Years 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, achieve well in ICT to exceed expectations in Year 6.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English achieve well.
- Higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving more.

#### **Commentary**

1. Many children start school with standards that are below those typically found and some of their skills, most notably in their personal and social development, are well below typical levels. A significant number of children have some difficulty in sharing resources, following instructions or lack confidence in joining in. A high proportion of children speak little English when they start school but a significant proportion are much more proficient in their own language and represent the full ability range. Achievement in personal and social skills' development is significantly stronger in Reception than in Nursery where teaching sometimes lacks organisation and purpose. As a result, after nearly a term, several children in the Nursery are still to fully settle to school routines. Achievement is more even in acquiring key literacy and mathematical skills. Those at the early stages of learning English achieve well in learning English, mainly because of the focus on speaking and listening and the extra help they receive. Achievement in physical and creative development also has an even pattern in the Nursery and Reception and is satisfactory. Taken overall, therefore, achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but, despite this, a significant minority of pupils are not on course to meet the early learning goals for the end of Reception.
2. The pressures acting as barriers to achievement have increased since the last inspection. More pupils now have special educational needs, pupil mobility has increased significantly and the proportion of pupils starting school speaking little English has also increased. Although the overall trend of results has not matched the national trend, standards in the key areas of English and mathematics have been maintained. Indeed in writing they have increased. This has taken very strong leadership, especially in the face of a recent very high turnover of staff. However, the pattern of achievement is not consistent. The consistently good quality of teaching ensures that pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. However, the patchier quality in Years 1 and 2 results in flatter achievement. This can be seen both in the quality of work seen during the inspection and in national test results.
3. Results in the national tests of 2004 at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and below average in writing and in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, results were average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. The teacher assessment for science indicates standards to be well below average and few pupils gain the higher level. Inspection findings largely confirm this picture, indicating that current standards in Year 2 are below what would be expected at national levels across the three core subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (13.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.7 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. National test results for eleven-year-olds in 2004 show these were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with similar schools, however, they were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Inspection findings indicate that currently, standards are average in the three main core subjects. Standards in the key area of writing, which was identified as a weakness, have improved since the last inspection and standards are now average. The school achieved the targets set for performance in tests, apart from science, where the school fell a little short. Standards here have slipped since the last inspection largely because too little attention has been given to the investigative element of science. No significant difference is evident in the achievement of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.2 (25.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.1 (26.3)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. As well as the core subjects, the inspection focused on ICT and history. All other subjects were sampled and so no overall judgment was possible in these. In ICT, pupils achieve well, especially in Years 3 to 6, and have computer skills beyond those expected. Pupils' ability to apply these skills to other subjects is good because of good classroom resources, a fully equipped computer suite and good opportunities to put their skills into practice. Staff are well trained under the direction of a very able Lead Teacher seconded to support learning and this has helped to provide some good learning and boosted standards significantly. Pupils achieve well in history and reach the standards expected for their age.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall. Many benefit from good support in lessons, particularly those with specific statements of need. Those with behavioural needs progress very well and because of this are able to make the most of the learning opportunities presented to them. They often make good progress towards their learning targets. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English also achieve well, largely because of the very good level of help they receive in class, the care taken to maintain high self-esteem and the concentration on key skills evident in the school's curriculum.
7. The school is yet to coherently address the needs of higher attaining pupils. This includes pupils, mainly in the juniors, who now have achieved sufficiently well in acquiring English to strive for higher than expected levels of work. Lesson observations and an analysis of pupils' work, especially in mathematics, science, and to a lesser extent, English, show that some higher attaining pupils do not achieve as consistently well as they could. Teachers do not always ensure that learning tasks have sufficient challenge to extend pupils' skills and knowledge.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and pupils behave well. The provision the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance rates are poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear guidelines for managing behaviour and the thought given to making school life interesting have a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
- Positive reinforcement of gospel values and a concern for the individual ensures that an ethos of mutual respect and community pervades the school.
- The school helps pupils feel proud of their own cultures.
- Procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are very good.

### Commentary

8. Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. They are full of praise for their helpful teachers, the interesting lessons they enjoy and the wide range of clubs and trips they participate in. The school is successful in instilling in pupils a real desire to learn and a determination to do well. Older pupils, having been subject to the school's very good ethos for longer, typically settle to work quickly, have good concentration levels and answer questions eagerly. They follow instructions well, work hard and are keen to discuss their work and take pride in good presentation. The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes towards school, which stands as a testimony to the school's persistence in helping pupils develop as good citizens. One boy, for example, talked eloquently about how being a 'Red Hat' had helped him behave better and to learn how to control his temper. This typifies the school's attitude of not giving up on pupils. The school is very careful, for example, to ensure that responsibilities such as 'Red Hats' are open to the full range of cultures and behaviour evident in the school. Taking into account that the children's social and personal skills are well below those typically found when they join the Nursery, and that a minority have still to attain the early learning goals in this area by the time they start Year 1, this is a considerable achievement.
9. On the whole, pupils behave well and there is no significant difference between the behaviour of boys or girls or of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. This in turn helps ensure that both boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as each other. Pupils are usually helpful and considerate. The exception to this was in a few lessons in Years 1 and 2 and in the Nursery when weaknesses in the teaching and behaviour management were not entirely successful in engaging pupils. Break times and lunch times are pleasant and relaxed. There are some occasional boisterous moments on the playground amongst some boys but these are usually good-natured. Pupils show reverence during assemblies and prayer. Very high expectations are set for conduct and the school rigorously implements policies to achieve them. Bullying and racism seldom occur and are simply not tolerated. The exclusion rate is low given the context of the school.

### Exclusions

#### *Ethnic background of pupils*

#### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	24	0	0

White – Irish	36	0	0
White – any other White background	27	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	39	3	0
Black or Black British – African	124	1	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

10. An atmosphere of respect for all and a strong community spirit pervades the school. The ethos is very positive and the school mission statement is fully reflected in its work and practice. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, and for pupils' moral, social and cultural development it is very good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The close links with parishes, daily prayer, and the high quality of assemblies effectively promote good spiritual development. Positive reinforcement of gospel values and high moral standards and the recognition of an individual's intrinsic worth are real strengths. These help pupils to be considerate and thoughtful in their approaches to others and have high expectations of their own behaviour. The qualities required to become more mature and responsible, as pupils get older, are promoted very well. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are good and pupils develop good social skills and take on responsibility very well.
11. Cultural development is very strong and pupils' diverse ethnic heritages are valued and celebrated as a source of pride. The school's policy of encouraging pupils to bring in pictures and artefacts representative of their culture and displaying these prominently in the school stands as a visible symbol that cultural diversity is celebrated and valued. As a result pupils learn to appreciate the differing traditions and cultures in a highly supportive multi-cultural community. Special events such as Black History Month, International Week, and the Traveller and Refugee weeks raise the profile of community groups very well and encourage very good understanding.

### **Attendance**

12. Despite very good efforts on behalf of the school, the attendance rate is well below the national average. A significant minority of pupils, mainly from the Traveller community, account for the high absence rate. In addition, pupil mobility is high and the school is often not informed when pupils leave school. When this occurs, the school has to keep the absent pupils on roll until a home visit confirms their whereabouts. This depresses attendance and creates an artificially lower rate. Although timekeeping during the school day is good, punctuality on arrival at school is unsatisfactory as approximately one in ten pupils is regularly late each day.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6%	School data	0.4%

National data	5.1%
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National data	0.4%
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*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided for pupils is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is good and is enriched well by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The day-to-day care of pupils is very good and there are very good links with parents and good links with the local community.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The consistently good quality teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures pupils achieve well in the juniors.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 and in the Nursery lacks consistency, particularly in relation to the management of pupils and in teaching the class as a whole.
- The high quality of teamwork and the expertise of learning support staff make a very good contribution to the achievement of pupils, especially those with particular needs.
- Not enough attention is given to meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- Marking does not give pupils a clear enough idea of how to improve.

### **Commentary**

13. There are strengths in many aspects of the teaching in Years 3 to 6, which lead to pupils achieving well across a range of subjects. Not least is the management of pupils. Teachers are quick to praise pupils and, because lessons have clear intentions, teachers are confident in helping pupils see what is expected of them. Easy-going relationships set a relaxed tone, in which pupils can give of their best and in which teachers waste little time admonishing pupils. They are helped in this by the very clear guidelines the school has for managing and rewarding pupil behaviour which take due account of the complex needs of individual pupils. Teachers build on the atmosphere for learning they have created by the use of good techniques that involve pupils well in the openings of lessons. The use of whiteboards and visual aids are commonplace. Not only do these draw pupils of all abilities, especially those who have special educational needs or who are still not confident in using English, into the lesson but they set up learning well for follow up group work. Much thought is given to making activities interesting which succeeds in engaging pupils and motivating them to work hard and with confidence. For example, in a good lesson on abbreviating an article into headlines in a mixed Years 4 and 5 class, much of the learning was done orally, an approach to which pupils responded very well. Here, the use of whiteboards, on which pupils recorded their jottings, made a successful bridge to future writing and added variety to the lesson. This has not gone unnoticed by pupils, with many in the mixed Years 4 and 5 classes putting what they see as an improved atmosphere in the class down to the interesting tasks their new teacher has set them.
14. It is the lack of ability to manage pupils and involve them in learning that marks out less successful teaching. This is the principal difference in the quality of teaching found in the different classes in the Foundation Stage. The Reception teacher is more successful in creating a calm atmosphere in which she can set up a range of practical tasks in the confidence that children will work hard without her, or the support staff's constant attention. This is not always the case in the Nursery where learning can at times become hectic because the teacher is not consistent in what she expects of the children. There are examples of good teaching in Years 1 and 2, most notably in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class. Here, for example, in a good lesson on ordering instructions, the teacher's thoughtful use of visual aids ensured that pupils who spoke little English were involved from the start and that the interest of all pupils was captured. However, some teaching in Years 1 and 2, especially by new and inexperienced teachers, lacks the scope to fully meet pupils' needs. In contrast to teaching in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class, pupils are not involved enough in the beginning of lessons.

This causes pupils to be uncertain what to do, well-intentioned tasks flounder and subsequent work is of a poorer quality. When this happens, pupils show their frustration and behaviour deteriorates. Teachers here do not always have the skills and strategies to manage pupils effectively, tending to concentrate on the poorer aspects of behaviour rather than, as is the school's policy, to reward the better behaviour of the vast majority of pupils.

15. Learning support assistants make a very effective contribution to teaching and learning and, in Years 1 and 2 in particular, are crucial to the good achievement of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those who have special educational needs. They work closely with teachers and, because of the school's good monitoring of progress, are well deployed and actively involved in all parts of lessons. They encourage the involvement of reluctant pupils, help to maintain specific pupils' concentration, lead group work and give good support for pupils with social, emotional and other special educational needs and for those pupils who are at an early stage in learning English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs benefit well from the school's commitment to inclusion and sensitivity to individuals. These pupils are taught well and they receive good support. Work is planned to address targets in pupils' individual education plans and to link with class work. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress in learning because learning support assistants work well with pupils in lessons, primarily concentrating on breaking down the barriers to learning associated with pupils in the earlier stages of language acquisition. This aids their achievement and understanding of other aspects of the curriculum. As a result, nearly all pupils achieve to their capabilities, especially in literacy and language, and this is evident in the improvement in their written and spoken English as they progress through the school.
  
16. There are some weaknesses in the provision for higher attainers who are capable of achieving more. In English, mathematics and science, there is insufficient planning for the most able. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate topics and pupils have too few chances to be independent in their learning. Where such opportunities are given, pupils respond very well and learn efficiently. The oldest pupils in a very good ICT lesson were able to organise, refine and present a set of multi-media pages on bullying and the results were impressive across the ability range. The school has identified this an area for development; plans, which also include provision for the gifted and talented, are at an early stage and have yet to be implemented in a widespread manner.
  
17. Although the school has well-defined policies and practices for pupil assessment, including analysis of results by ethnicity groups and gender, some of these, particularly in relation to target setting and the involvement of pupils in assessing their own work, are at an early stage of development. They are not yet a common feature of lessons. However, when they are used, most notably in ICT, they have a positive impact on both pupils' attitudes and their knowledge of how to improve. Of more concern is the quality of marking. Although work is marked conscientiously, marking is not analytical enough, tending to rely on praise rather than pinpointing developments. This further undermines the capacity of pupils to identify the next stages in learning.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2 (5%)	19 (49%)	16 (41%)	2 (5%)	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.*

**The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good, providing well for pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English. There is a good range of opportunities for enrichment

through sport, educational visits and special events. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Curriculum leaders have ensured consistent implementation of the school's well-planned curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have full access to a rich and varied curriculum because they are well supported in lessons.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The curriculum is enriched by work that is closely linked to pupils' cultural and social backgrounds and by a good range of extra-curricular activities.

### **Commentary**

18. There is an appropriate two-year cycle for the delivery of the curriculum to ensure effective coverage by mixed-age classes and careful thought has been given within schemes of work which provide for the progressive acquisition of skills and knowledge. This framework has served the school well through recent widespread changes in staffing and represents an improvement since the last inspection. Newly appointed curriculum leaders have taken the lead while staff new to school find their feet and become familiar with school guidelines. Weekly planning meetings, which they lead for the infants and the juniors, ensure that schemes of work are implemented as envisaged. This has helped maintain consistency in provision.
19. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education which makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. This enjoys a high profile in the school and, together with work in religious education, ensures issues about personal conduct and how individuals relate to each other are given high profile. Pupils in Year 6 receive talks and video presentations about sex education and visiting theatre groups give effective support to the school's drugs education policy. This creates a supportive environment for the considerable number of pupils who have social and emotional needs, enabling them to benefit fully from the additional help they are given.
20. A very important feature of provision is the support for pupils with social and emotional needs through a pastoral system involving pupils, teachers, support staff and other agencies. Special funding has been targeted very well through the setting up of the 'On Track' project, which provides mentoring support, and the Positive Behaviour Programme which promotes inclusion of vulnerable and disaffected pupils. This additional support is very effective in settling in pupils with highly complex emotional and social needs and in raising their confidence in learning and self-esteem. The school highly values pupils' achievements in behaviour and consistently affirms them with praise. The curriculum is adapted well to make it relevant to these pupils so that attention is given to their personal and social development. In English lessons, for example, pupils consider a wide range of issues, such as bullying. As a result, pupils manage well in class and this helps them make the most of their time at school. By the time they reach the upper end of the school, they show very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school therefore becomes a supportive and safe place where pupils can learn.
21. Specific work for higher attaining pupils is, however, given insufficient attention and this adversely affects their achievement. The school successfully meets the needs of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and has developed good procedures to ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language have full access to the curriculum. Their development is well supported by the school's inclusive ethos, which celebrates the different cultural backgrounds of pupils and the multi-cultural nature of modern society.
22. The school provides a number of extra-curricular activities throughout the year. After-school football coaching by a qualified coach, and lunch time basketball were taking place at the time



of the inspection. Opportunities for competitive sports are, however, limited. There is a good range of musical instrumental tuition. All pupils benefit from free recorder tuition and the provision of free instruments in Year 3. Singing plays a significant part in the music curriculum and is of a good quality. All of this goes a considerable way to making school life interesting.

23. The curriculum is enriched by participation in a number of annual events. All pupils are offered the opportunity of at least one annual educational visit and a residential visit is offered to older pupils. Visiting theatre groups, artists and speakers such as an Irish story teller also contribute to particular aspects of the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and on their understanding of each other's cultures. Displays of work provide a rich environment that also celebrates different cultures. There are close links with local churches and visits to a Hindu temple, which reinforce religious and spiritual aspects of the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures that the care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are very effective. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is outstanding.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The focus on building self-esteem and confidence in an inclusive and compassionate community is a key strength of the school.
- The holistic approach to supporting and guiding pupils is very good.
- The arrangements for pupil induction are good.
- The school values pupils' opinions in an exemplary way and these form part of school improvement.

### **Commentary**

24. A caring ethos permeates the school especially when it comes to the welfare of pupils and the promotion of personal growth. Pupils confirmed strongly that they value the excellent relationships with staff and would always have someone to turn to if they were worried or troubled. Parents also feel that their children are well cared for. The school's supportive and caring culture is seen at its best when pupils with a range of complex needs including emotional trauma, are supported on an individual basis through the 'On Track' project to fully access the curriculum and enjoy school life. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence levels are regained very well.
25. The school is interested in the 'whole' pupil and tracks personal as well as academic development. Pupils are constantly reminded about the importance of good social skills and work ethic, and are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities or take on responsibility to help them develop greater maturity as they grow up through the school. Although there are clear procedures for assessing pupils' work, target setting for individuals is at an early stage. Some classes set targets for English and mathematics but these vary from class to class in how specific and useful they are to pupils.
26. Procedures for inducting new pupils into Nursery are thorough and staff soon get to know children and forge strong partnerships with parents. However, some teaching in the Nursery does not build on procedures as successfully as it might and so some children find it difficult to acclimatise to school life. Those pupils who arrive at other times are catered for effectively on an individual basis. Buddies are assigned and sometimes other pupils act as interpreters to ensure that pupils are able to be fully included in all school activities. As a result, these pupils settle to school well.

27. The school gives a very high priority to the opinions of its pupils and there are many ways in which it collects and acts on pupils' views in an outstanding way. Pupils feel that this is a listening school and that their ideas form an important part of school improvement. The school council is very well established and effectively channels ideas forward to the senior management. Various pupil surveys also canvass views very well, test satisfaction levels and help to address issues. 'Red Hats' and 'Red Bands' hold regular meetings which involve sharing information about life in the playground and addressing issues in a most impressive way.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are very good. Links with the local community are good and the school's links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of information parents receive about their children's progress is very good.
- The school actively seeks, values and acts upon parents' views.
- The school works closely with families to support learning very well.
- Links with the community enrich learning and personal development effectively.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents confirmed high levels of confidence in the school in almost every area and feel part of a strong and welcoming family community. Parents feel a true sense of partnership, based on good two-way communications and mutual trust. This is typified by the very good quality of the information parents receive about the progress their children are making. School reports are very detailed and contain precise individual information about all subjects and personal development. Arrangements for formal and informal consultation are very good. Newsletters, booklets, letters about curriculum planning and all the other information parents are provided with are very good and help to keep parents fully involved in their children's education and school life.
29. The school is very open to seeking parents' views. These are regularly sought using a questionnaire and when parents raise issues the school addresses them. Parents recently felt that they wanted to have an everyday way of putting their ideas forward and the school provided a suggestion box for this purpose. The school is approachable and welcomes parents. It is keen to ensure high satisfaction levels and is very successful in this regard. Complaints rarely occur.
30. The school works closely with parents, especially those that receive extra support for learning. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language are in regular contact and information is shared to enable parents to support learning well. The links with Traveller families and the Traveller Support Service are very good. Refugee families and asylum seekers are well supported, especially when they first arrive in the country, and are inducted into the school community quickly and effectively. Parental involvement is seen as a very crucial aspect of this provision. Pupils' progress is reviewed with parents, and contact is regular and frequent. Parents are consulted and supported in developing their children's wellbeing. The school systematically provides guidance for pupils' academic and personal development and monitors and evaluates their achievements. The pupils in the 'On track' initiative, aimed at helping disaffected pupils, have particularly close and almost daily links with parents who appreciate all the help and support their children receive.
31. The school is an integral part of the Catholic community it serves and there are strong links with two local parishes. The clergy are welcome and regular visitors help to enrich personal development. The school also makes good efforts to forge contact with wider aspects of the

school's community. For example, pupils' relatives and other members of the school community helped to celebrate the very successful Black History Month, Traveller and refugee weeks and the International Week. The school uses the rich history and geography of London well for school trips and to enhance cultural development when pupils visit places like the local Hindu Temple. The links with local experts for learning support are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Very good leadership by the headteacher is backed by the satisfactory leadership of staff new to senior positions and by subject co-ordinators, many of whom are also new to post. Governors provide good support for the school. Leadership has done much to overcome the not inconsiderable barriers to achievement the school faces.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Principled leadership, especially by the headteacher, has created a school with a very strong sense of will and a determination to do its best for pupils' wellbeing.
- Successful leadership ensures the school has a consistent approach to meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs.
- Decisive action has been taken to settle new staff to school and rebuild management structures.
- Careful thought is given to the professional needs of staff.
- Governors have a full understanding of the challenges the school faces and have a strong voice in how it addresses these.

### **Commentary**

32. Leadership, especially by the headteacher, has done much to overcome the principal barriers to achievement. In this regard, the overall quality of leadership and management, especially by the headteacher and the governing body, has improved since the last inspection.
33. The headteacher, leading by example, has created an atmosphere in school in which individuals matter. Her open and empowering style of leadership, and concern for the individual, is evident in the knowledge she has of pupils, their families and the culture within which the school operates. Snatched moments are taken to talk to pupils about their concerns and her open availability to parents helps forge trusting relationships. Other staff show the same concern for pupils and so a strong feeling of harmony and community ensues. Given the high proportion of pupils who have social and emotional needs, this is a considerable achievement. The headteacher has enlisted the support of specialist advice, both to help individual pupils and to develop the expertise of staff in managing behaviour. This is working well. Older pupils who have gone through the school talk openly about how they have been helped to become better citizens and, with a few exceptions, staff manage pupil behaviour very well.
34. Commendable work by the special needs co-ordinator and local education authority support services have developed staff awareness through training and information about classroom strategies. This ensures that all pull in the same direction and is the principal reason behind the success the school has in changing pupil behaviour. This has proved critical in the light of widespread change and it is testimony to the success of this that many teachers employ the school's clear guidelines for managing behaviour. Much of this is down to the skills of the co-ordinator in harnessing and managing resources from a range of specialist agencies.
35. A strong sense of mission and determination on the part of the headteacher and the governing body has seen the school through a period of unrivalled change. For a variety of reasons, beyond the control of the school, many experienced staff left the school and two-thirds of the teaching staff are new to the school. It is testimony to the strength of leadership that the school has come through this and is well placed to develop from here. Parents strongly feel

that the school is well run and that their children's education has been unaffected by all the recent change. Induction procedures are strong and, because clear policies and guidelines which govern teaching have been in place for some time, new staff have quickly gelled and, with one or two exceptions, already reflect school policy in their everyday work. Central to this has been the careful use and deployment of teaching support assistants who have provided a degree of consistency through staffing changes and have been able to work alongside new staff. This has done much to ensure the smooth running of the school through a period of instability. Analytical monitoring of teaching by the acting deputy headteacher and by the headteacher have given leadership a good view of its overall quality and training and support needs. The headteacher has been quick to put additional support in place. There are signs that this is working, with close attention given to behaviour management, in particular, paying dividends. However work remains to be done. Leadership is well aware that the largely inexperienced teaching force in Years 1 and 2 has some way to go to develop the expertise required to consistently meet pupils' diverse needs and that a continued focus on the implementation of school guidelines is needed as new staff put into practice school policy, for example in relation to assessment. The school knows itself well and so the strength of the support available and the clarity of guidelines put it in a good position to achieve its well-formed aims.

36. Staff changes have resulted in most co-ordinators and senior staff being new to post. Leadership has done much to rebuild management structures and has begun to equip staff with the skills necessary to lead their areas of responsibility forward. Where co-ordinators have been in post for some time, principally for special educational needs, leadership is well formed and effective. The school had given much thought to developing the role of co-ordinators, a weakness noted in the last inspection. Given the very good quality of information outgoing co-ordinators have given to new co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science, ICT, most of the foundation subjects and for pupils speaking English as additional language, previous actions have been effective. The headteacher, anticipating the upheaval of several key co-ordinators leaving, put in place deliberate 'hand over' actions. New co-ordinators therefore, received a very clear picture of the current position in their subjects. This shows very good use of data and analysis of test results to pinpoint areas for improvement, both for the school as whole, and for each year group. Analysis also looks carefully at the performance of boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. In addition action plans were written for the forthcoming year, with timescales setting out what each co-ordinator needs to do to fulfil these. New co-ordinators speak with clarity about what they have inherited and what they need to do next, and in several instances have made a start on this. This enables governors to satisfy themselves that the school continues to move forward and also provides a training agenda for leadership.
37. Over the past term the headteacher has paid very close attention to the management training of staff. Although this is at an early stage, the signs are that it is working well. Wherever possible, the headteacher has enlisted outside help to work alongside new leaders. This is working well. Two new senior managers and the new co-ordinator for pupils who speak English as second language have, for example, worked hand in hand with local authority advisors. The one exception to this is in the Foundation Stage where, despite support from an early years' consultant, leadership remains ill-informed and is not effective in planning for the future. Senior staff have carried out observations to gain expertise and confidence. As a result, the school has recognised the needs of more able pupils who have become fluent in English and has raised its ambition for these pupils. The buying in of a leading teacher for ICT is proving equally effective. ICT teaching has been carefully monitored and the new co-ordinator has been able to work in partnership with outside help to develop her own skills as she implemented the action plan. This is one of the key reasons why achievement in ICT is good. The school rightly sees this as template to use with other newly appointed co-ordinators. On another level, performance management procedures are used well for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Adults clearly value the process of performance management because it provides them with opportunities to talk about their jobs and how well they are doing. Performance management objectives unite the staff in searching for common areas of improvement and enable the headteacher to tailor training accordingly. A very good balance is

struck between meeting the needs of staff and serving school improvement targets and is one reason why learning support assistants make such an important contribution to the school. The upshot of all of this is that staff feel valued and are willing to learn from the practice and ideas of others.

38. Governors have a good understanding of the school's current position and what it needs to do to improve. They have joined with the headteacher well in making many new appointments and have a strong voice in deciding future priorities for the school. For example, they have helped shape present management structures and help decide on staff responsibilities. Governors bring a varied expertise to the school. Financial management procedures for example, are strong, with the governors concerned having a detailed knowledge of what has been allocated to various budget holders. They are aided in this by the very efficient work of the school's bursar. Spending is linked well to the school's current priorities and the school has anticipated future changes in the school, such as the need to move to single form entry. This puts the school on a firm financial footing. Governors are aware of community feeling. As well as keeping a close ear to the ground, there are systems to take on board the views of others by, for example, consulting with parents and pupils. This has been very important given the widespread change in the school. Governors have been tenacious in pressing for improvement to the building and have, for example, worked closely with the local authority and the diocese on proposals for building a new school. This also helps take some of the burden off the shoulders of the headteacher and enables her to concentrate on settling in and developing new staff. Statutory duties are met, with governors for example, well aware of the school's racial equality policy and of the success of its implementation.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,012,994	Balance from previous year	24,996
Total expenditure	1,016,225	Balance carried forward to the next	21,765
Expenditure per pupil	3,215		

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. The school has a Reception class of 25 pupils and a Nursery which currently caters for 23 children who attend on a full-time basis. Overall the attainment of children on entry to Nursery is below that found nationally. In particular, a high proportion of children begin with personal and social skills that are well below average. A high proportion of children also start school speaking little or no English. These represent the full ability range and, although not fluent in English, several are proficient in their own language.

Good induction procedures mean that strong relationships are forged with parents. However, some weaknesses in how children are managed in the Nursery mean that not all children settle as well to school as they might. Taken overall, teaching is satisfactory and children's achievement is satisfactory. However, because of more successful methods of managing children in Reception, achievement in personal and social skills here is good.

In both classes teachers work well with support staff but teamwork across the stage as a whole is not as strong. This is because leadership of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The recent work of an external consultant has helped identify some areas for development but the Foundation Stage leader has given too little thought to how these might be implemented and evaluated. In particular assessment procedures do not build cohesively through children's time in the Foundation Stage and although staff diligently carry out observations of learning, the recording of this is not well thought through. The portfolio of experiences and assessment being completed by the Reception teacher provides a good model for further work and enables staff here to track progress more readily than in the Nursery.

Teamwork across the Foundation Stage is not helped by the geography of the school in which Reception and Nursery classes are somewhat apart. Both have access to a designated area for outdoor play. This represents an improvement for Reception children since the last inspection. The outdoor play area for the Nursery is of a good quality and provides a stimulating environment which, in the main, is well used. The Nursery classroom is a good size and, although adequately resourced, is not as imaginatively set up as it might be. The Reception class, which is small in size, is set up with a space for each area of learning. However, on occasion, some activities, which are more suited to indoors, take place outdoors because of space.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities in the Nursery to promote good behaviour and responsibility are not always grasped.
- Well thought out routines and calm teaching in the Reception class provide good opportunities for children to work and play together in peace.

#### **Commentary**

39. When they start school, many pupils have great difficulty following instructions and working alongside each other. Careful thought has been given to routines in the Nursery to promote independence, with children, for example, self registering when they arrive in the morning. As a result, the day gets off to a good start. However, there are occasions when the working atmosphere becomes hectic. This occurs when tasks are not well thought out and is more likely to occur when the teacher is working with the class as a whole, when, because of a lack

of involvement, children can become restless. For example, in a lesson in which the class had to share items with the person next to them, behaviour degenerated because too many children were watching and for many the task of passing on a toy proved beyond them. Staff in the Nursery meet with more success when they join with children working in small groups. Here, children can receive personal attention and they sustain concentration for longer periods and generally work in more co-operative ways. Teaching in Reception sets up good routines that children respond to positively. They know exactly what is expected of them and can, for instance, organise themselves into groups with little fuss. The teacher's calm manner, echoed by support staff, sets a good tone which children mirror. Children know that they will need to earn the staff's praise which is not given out indiscriminately. This places value on it and can be contrasted with the scattering of praise evident in the Nursery which is ineffective in promoting appropriate behaviour. Reception children are expected to take more responsibility for equipment than those in the Nursery. Aided by signals such as the shaking of castanets, children in Reception knew immediately that they were to tidy up the activity they had been doing and leave it ready for the next group. Most manage this well and, as a result, become aware of the needs of others and act in partnership with staff in organising learning. An otherwise good outside play lesson in the Nursery, in which staff joined in well with children to promote team games, was let down because children largely ignored the teacher's plea to tidy up. This did little to instil a sense of care and responsibility in the children. As a result of the mixed quality of provision, achievement is uneven and several children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and other staff join in well with group activities to promote speaking and listening.
- Whole class teaching does not always engage enough children.
- The early stages of reading and writing are developed well in short dedicated sessions.

### **Commentary**

40. In both the Nursery and Reception, learning is most effective when staff work alongside children in small group activities. Here, care is taken to promote speaking and listening and, in particular, this helps the many children who begin school speaking little English. Class teaching is not always as effective as this and there are times when children are expected to sit for too long and rely on listening for clues as to what to do. Here, less confident children or those not proficient in English can become passive. Teaching of the class is more effective when signs and picture clues are used to help children understand. For example, in a good physical education session, pictures of various types of movements led to a high level of enjoyment and participation because all children knew immediately what was expected of them. However, such techniques are not consistently employed. There are satisfactory opportunities in pretend play areas for children to write and read, and in the Reception class in particular, these are favoured activities which allow for the natural use of key skills. For example, several children enjoyed writing party invitations in a pretend play area. Good use is made of set times to teach reading and writing. These short sessions help children learn the sounds of letters and are often made interesting by the use of songs and rhymes. However, despite satisfactory achievement, a significant proportion of children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals, particularly in writing, by the end of Reception.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are some missed opportunities in pretend play to develop children's mathematical thinking.
- Games and short activities, often taking place outdoors, have a good mathematical focus.

### **Commentary**

41. In both the Nursery and Reception, staff make good use of the outdoor play spaces to add an extra dimension to children's learning. In the Nursery, for example, the teacher led a sorting activity in which children practised counting skills. She judged very well when to give children the lead and, because of her clear modelling, children were able to match numbers to objects and were able to carry on with the activity when the teacher worked with another group. In Reception, in particular, the teacher makes good use of short sessions to teach key skills. Here, signs and large numbers help all children join in so that they are beginning to learn the language of mathematics, such as 'one more'. Learning is brought to life with songs which link counting to movement, with the children, for example, adding one more to their line as they dance to a number song. However, there are times when opportunities are missed to promote mathematical learning. Pretend play areas, for example, often have a language base and there are few prompts to engage children in mathematical activities. Children rely heavily on the teacher to bring this aspect out of these situations and, as they often do these activities without an adult, potential mathematical learning can be lost. All in all, therefore, because of satisfactory achievement, the majority of children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area. However, a significant minority are unlikely to do so and few are on course to exceed them.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

42. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Planning indicates a satisfactory range of activities to help children to widen their understanding of the world and stimulate their curiosity. Practical activities are used effectively to enhance their learning. They develop a good understanding of their own culture as they celebrate the main Christian festivals. This is extended well to include other cultures.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Outside play, particularly in the Nursery, is used well to help children develop key skills.
- Dedicated lessons in the school hall supplement provision well.
- Children have access to a satisfactory range of small tools but these are not always used to best effect.

### **Commentary**

43. Achievement in this area of learning is satisfactory. Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals, especially in games and gymnastics skills. Fewer are on course to achieve them in the manipulation of scissors and other tools because opportunities to use these are sometimes missed. Some creative activities are too restrictive and too much preliminary work, done by staff, leaves too little for children to do. The well-equipped outdoor play area is used well by Nursery staff. It affords a good range of experiences and staff are



careful to ensure that children are given ample opportunity to climb, ride trikes and to play with a good range of balls and other small games equipment. Staff use these times well to show children what to do and to encourage co-operation. This is often done by joining in with children to play catch for example. This sets a good example which children respond to positively. The outdoor play in Reception does not afford this same range of experiences but good planning ensures that the hall is used to good effect to encourage movement and dance with, for example, the children moving energetically as they took 'the Big Red Bus' on a journey.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pretend play areas are not stimulating enough.
- Children have a good range of opportunities to paint and create images.
- There are some missed opportunities for children to be taught and to use a wide range of skills.

### **Commentary**

44. Although each classroom is set up with pretend play areas, in the Nursery, in particular the rather uninspiring nature of these is not inviting enough and does not draw children into giving full vent to their imagination. The Three Bears Café, for example, contains some cups, saucers, play food and lots of bears but is not enticing enough. One or two children will take the opportunity to organise a tea party but several did little more than take teddy and wander around the room. Staff tend to leave children to their own devices in these areas and while some are very capable of making up imaginary situations, others need encouragement and a role model to copy. Not enough attention, especially in the Nursery, is paid to this. In contrast, children in the Nursery are given a good range of opportunities to paint and there is a good balance of children-initiated painting and modelling and teacher-led experiences. Creative experiences are also built into the daily diet of children's experiences in Reception but there are occasions when too much is done for children. For example, children chose from a teacher-selected set of shape and material when making a monster's face. This gave children too few choices to make and because shapes were pre-cut, limited the learning of skills of gluing. Achievement overall is satisfactory but children's current attainment is below expectations and a significant minority are unlikely to reach the early goals by the end of Reception.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Robust management systems have helped maintain continuity despite recent changes in subject leadership.
- Pupils achieve better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 because of better management of pupils.
- The school encourages the enjoyment of books and this enjoyment results in good achievements in reading by Year 6.
- Pupils are given interesting contexts for writing, which capture their interest.
- Learning support assistants make a telling contribution to pupils with particular needs. However little help is given to higher attaining pupils.

- Marking mainly gives praise and encouraging comments but does not always tell pupils how to improve their work

### **Commentary**

45. Strong leadership has helped keep overall standards in English on an even keel despite an increase in the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and of pupils who join the school at the early stages of speaking English. Thorough management systems have been put in place which have served the temporary co-ordinator well. Here, prompt assessment of the quality of teaching has led to well-devised training and has ensured that actions to improve performance have been pushed through. As a result, standards in writing in Years 3 to 6, weaknesses noted in the last inspection, have risen.
46. The effective use of learning support assistants makes a significant difference to the achievements of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants are skilled at working alongside teachers, so that pupils who have special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of learning English are able to join with the rest of the class. Additional time is found for pupils who need to catch up in reading and writing. The presence of learning support assistants in a lesson also goes a long way to settling pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs to their work, reflecting the school's guidelines for managing pupils. However, comparatively little help is given to higher attaining pupils who often work independently and, because of this, few pupils exceed national expectations in English.
47. The school's concentration on improving and managing pupils' behaviour is paying dividends. Teachers take care to establish routines and procedures in lessons so that pupils know what is expected of them. As expectations are much clearer in Years 3 to 6 than in some Years 1 and 2 classes, relationships are comfortable in older classes. Consequently, pupils are able to work more effectively in groups and pairs and this helps them to develop their speaking and listening skills. Older pupils respond well to teachers' perceptive questions, actively participate in discussions, and achieve well. Although overall standards are average in Year 6, a good number of pupils are articulate and confident speakers. By contrast, in some younger classes, pupils tend to be restless because of the teachers' lack of skills in engaging them and so participation in discussion is not as widespread. As a result, achievement in speaking and listening is not as strong in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are below average.
48. The school ethos is strongly focused towards developing skills in reading and writing. There is a good range of books and a library to stimulate pupils' interest in books. Pupils read regularly at school and visit the library to do research work. The enjoyment of books that this instils leads to good achievement in reading by Year 6, where current standards meet expectations. However, the pattern of achievement is not even because not enough emphasis is given to the teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2. Short sessions are often tagged on to the end of a lesson when pupils' concentration is not at its best and so pupils do not achieve as well as they might during these times. This leaves much to be done in Years 3 to 6. Aided by the careful tracking of progress, the school is able to identify pupils who are behind in reading and ensures that they receive a range of support from learning support assistants who make good contributions to their reading. In addition, good quality teaching in Years 3 to 6 offers pupils a range of opportunities to read and tests and develops pupils' understanding well through discussion. As a result, achievement is stronger and pupils make up for the somewhat flatter picture of achievement evident in some classes in Years 1 and 2.
49. As a result of well-targeted training, teachers have developed confidence in structuring their demonstration of writing to a range of interesting purposes. For example, teachers make good links between reading and writing so that pupils acquire the conventions of writing from reading. In Year 6, a report on the 'London Marathon' was used as a model for writing. The pupils were shown how to analyse the structure of the report step by step and finally to write a conclusion to the report independently. An important feature of the teaching is that the teachers are perceptive in choosing contexts and content for writing that entices pupils into

writing. These are often linked to pupils' own experience and backgrounds so that they can relate to them and see the relevance for writing. For example, a lower attaining pupil in Year 6 has made an effort in writing a biography of Kelly Holmes and the pupils in Years 3 and 4 have written a report on an accident in the classroom. As a result, standards have improved since the last inspection and at the end of Year 6 now meet national expectations.

50. Implementation of the school guidelines for target-setting and the marking of books is in its infancy and, as yet, is not consistently being used. A thorough analysis of test data allows for curriculum targets to be set and teachers ensure these are reflected in their planning. However, they are not referred to often enough in lessons for them to influence pupils' thinking. Books are marked regularly with encouraging comments but there are fewer indications given to pupils as to how they might improve.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

51. Language and literacy are promoted satisfactorily through other subjects of the curriculum. There are some good examples of teachers using lessons, such as history, religious education and Personal, social and health education, to develop reading and writing skills. For example, the pupils in Year 6 have used their literacy skills well to write poetry on bullying.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Thorough management systems and well-considered transfer of information have minimised the disruption caused by a change of subject leader.
- More sophisticated approaches to class teaching and the management of pupils result in better achievement in Years 3 to 6 than Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English receive very good support but work is insufficiently matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- Inconsistent use is made of the school's close analysis of data.
- Mathematics is well supported by work in ICT.

### **Commentary**

52. Despite considerable recent changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new co-ordinator, information about previous monitoring, the close tracking of pupil progress and assessment data have been effectively transferred. There is a clear action plan for re-establishing and building on effective systems that were previously in place. This has helped maintain the standards of the last inspection which are average in Year 6 and below average in Year 2.
53. However, the pattern of achievement is not even and, although satisfactory overall, is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. On occasion in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning can be unsatisfactory because some teaching lacks the necessary skills to manage pupils or to engage them well enough in learning. Techniques to involve all pupils in question and answer sessions are limited and, because pupils do not always understand what is required of them, behaviour can deteriorate. When this occurs the teacher spends an undue amount of time admonishing pupils and valuable time is lost. The use of practical apparatus and whiteboards features in some infant lessons, especially in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class, but they are more commonly found in Years 3 to 6. Such techniques, as used in a good lesson in Year 6, when pupils used whiteboards to record their answers when rounding up numbers, ensured that all were purposefully engaged. It also gave the teacher valuable assessment information which enabled her to adjust questioning to make sure pupils were fully prepared for independent work.

54. The best teaching ensures that the more able are suitably challenged but, as yet, this is not a common feature of teaching. The most skilful teaching, as was the case in a good lesson in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class, adjusts the level of questioning in the opening to lessons to keep the more able on their toes. On other occasions, as was the case in very good lesson in a mixed Years 4 and 5 class, the teacher provided a range of activities around the common theme of transferring information from frequency charts to bar graphs. However, work in books, especially in Years 1 and 2, is the same regardless of ability and, as a result, higher attaining pupils do not achieve what they are capable of. This can be contrasted with the good achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English. Teachers are careful to use and explain correct vocabulary which helps pupils to use and understand correct terminology but the key to success is the very good partnership teachers establish with teaching assistants. These often work very effectively with groups of pupils and ensure that pupils are given the individual attention needed to build on class teaching.
55. The school has put in place potentially good strategies to involve pupils in their learning but as yet these are not having the desired impact. Although there are examples in marking of letting pupils know what they need to do to improve, there is little reference in teaching or in marking to pupils' personal targets. This reduces their impact as they are not at the forefront of pupils' minds. More successful is the use of group and class targets which arise out of the close analysis of test data. These are used well by teachers to adjust the content of the curriculum to address identified weaknesses.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. There is appropriate use of mathematics across the curriculum. ICT is well used for data handling and for other aspects of mathematics and supports and motivates the pupils well. Mathematics is appropriately linked to data used in other subjects, such as science and geography. There are close links with literacy in some lessons, such as when pupils are asked to record information from charts and diagrams in sentence form.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are not given regular enough opportunities to develop their understanding of science through experimentation.
- Higher attaining pupils are sometimes unchallenged by the work they complete.
- The good use of learning support assistants makes a difference to the achievement of pupils with specific needs.
- Marking does not always give pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

57. Standards of pupils' work in science have slipped since the last inspection and are presently below the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall there is a tendency in lessons to concentrate on building up pupils' knowledge of scientific facts rather than their understanding of scientific enquiry. This is evident from pupils' work. Whilst pupils develop their observation skills and scientific vocabulary when, for example, learning about muscles and bones in Year 3, there are presently insufficient opportunities in most year groups for pupils to develop the full range of skills associated with investigative science. In particular, they are rarely involved in planning their own investigations independently. This affects their achievement and so pupils' knowledge of science is in advance of their ability to think and act as scientists. Where pupils

are given the chance to experiment, they respond well and clearly enjoy the more practical nature these lessons provide. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and, although she has had few opportunities to find out for herself the current state of provision, work by the previous co-ordinator has alerted her to this critical shortcoming in provision. An action plan is in place to address this.

58. Too little thought has been given to making work harder for higher attaining pupils. In an otherwise good lesson in Year 6, in which pupils had been given some freedom to devise an experiment on micro-organisms, pupils were all required to complete similar tasks. Whilst pupils were keen to learn and behaved well, a feature common to many lessons, the task did little to develop the independence and ability of higher attaining pupils. A similar picture emerges in many other classes and in the written work pupils have completed to date.
59. Although tasks are similar for pupils who have other needs, these pupils manage well because of the very good work of learning support assistants. These are skilled at working alongside class teachers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are given structured assistance with their learning and are able to fully join lessons. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary and few opportunities are missed to help pupils use and extend their use of language.
60. Although most written work in pupils' books is marked, it is often with a tick or an appreciative comment which is not always diagnostic or informative and pupils often have little idea of how to improve their work. In addition, the school has yet to develop effective systems to assess pupils' progress in science and teachers therefore have only a limited understanding of how well pupils are doing and this compounds the difficulties teachers have in making the work harder for higher attaining pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good use of specialist support has helped put the leadership of ICT on a firm footing.
- Teachers are confident users of ICT and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Assessment enables pupils to measure the success of their own work.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

61. Despite the lack of an ICT co-ordinator during recent months, the school has maintained the above average standards noted in the last inspection and pupils continue to achieve well. The decision to employ a specialist teacher for part of the week to work alongside new staff and the newly appointed co-ordinator has proved to be very good. New staff have received appropriate training in the use of ICT, both in the computer suite and in classrooms, and are effective users of interactive whiteboards. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is good, and the school is able to satisfy itself that it is getting best value from recently improved facilities. The arrangement is also having a positive effect on management. The newly appointed and inexperienced co-ordinator has worked in tandem with the specialist teacher to implement new assessment procedures and to update the scheme of work to ensure that interesting tasks are set for pupils. This has developed her leadership qualities and has put

the school in a strong position to improve further. It is testimony to the innovative nature of this arrangement, and to the confidence that has been instilled in the new co-ordinator and staff, that the specialist teacher is now able to take more of a back seat.

62. The hallmark of the best teaching is the challenge of tasks set for pupils. This is most commonly seen in Years 3 to 6. Here, teachers often select engaging subject matter, such as the design by Year 4 pupils of a “wanted poster” to recapture Ann Boleyn or, as in Year 6, where pupils had produced a series of slides to tell a story about bullying, with pupils recording their own voices and captions. Such tasks successfully link the development of key skills with the stimulating and thought-provoking use of them. Pupils invariably rise to the challenge such teaching makes and respond well to the carefully constructed demonstrations which equip them with the skills needed to carry out such imaginative work. Some weaknesses, borne out of inexperience, are evident in some teaching in Years 1 and 2 which is not entirely successful in making instruction clear. When this happens a degree of frustration can creep in as pupils become stuck and have to wait to be helped.
63. A notable aspect of lessons is the way teachers involve pupils in assessing their work. Lessons commonly end with pupils assessing how well their work has matched the intentions of the lesson. This is only made possible by the clarity of planning and it does much to give pupils ownership of their work and acts as a very good guide to pupils’ thinking as they go about their work.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

64. ICT is effectively used across the curriculum. There are good links with most subjects. Pupils have produced bar graphs and pie charts to record data from other subjects such as science. Text and graphics have been used to reproduce the pupil’s own poems and greetings cards. Computers have also been used to produce music and art work. History and geography often produce subject matter for work in the computer suite where most lessons link ICT with another subject.

### **HUMANITIES**

65. No judgement could be made about standards of attainment in **geography** as no lessons were observed during the inspection and there was only limited written evidence of pupils’ work. However, evidence from an examination of school planning and discussions with pupils confirm that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught throughout the school and that the subject is adequately resourced.

### **History**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Imaginative teaching makes the subject interesting for pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Too little thought has been given to matching work to pupils’ differing abilities.

### **Commentary**

66. The newly appointed co-ordinator has inherited a subject in which clear guidelines help teachers seek ways of making learning interesting. In the face of increasing pressures, leadership has helped maintain the standards of the last inspection in which pupils meet expectations by the time they reach Year 6. The school’s lively approach to history is typified by a good lesson in Year 3 in which pupils developed their knowledge of the life of Henry VIII through acting out various parts. This puts pupils in a good position to see history from the point of view of key characters and, on the whole, pupils say they enjoy the school’s practical approach to teaching history. They have good attitudes towards learning and are keenly interested in developing their understanding of the history of their own culture and of the culture of others. The impact of the school’s approach to history is stronger in Years 3 to 6

than in Years 1 and 2 and because of this achievement is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Here, limitations in how some teachers talk to the class as a whole does not make the most of good intentions. For example, a satisfactory lesson, where the teacher had gone to the trouble of packing a suitcase of items to help pupils see what life was like for evacuees, was let down by weak questioning. This failed to draw pupils into the discussion. As a result, when time came for pupils to work by themselves few had a clear enough idea what to do and the task was not completed as well as it might.

67. It is the ability of teachers to build upon interesting starting points that sets the best teaching apart. In a good lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher successfully encouraged pupils to use their imaginations when writing scary stories about Theseus and the Minotaur. Not only did this provide an interesting way for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the Greeks, it gave full reign to the imagination of higher attaining pupils and provided good links with literacy. This is not always the case and, more commonly, pupils of all abilities complete the same work. This can be too easy for higher attaining pupils who do not achieve as well as they might, and is only possible for pupils who have special educational needs or who need help with English because of the very good work of learning support assistants.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

68. In **art and design** and in **design and technology** only one lesson of each was observed and so no overall judgement on provision can be made. Teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays show how the subjects are planned and taught over the year. Pupils develop skills of designing and making different objects and evaluating them as required in the curriculum. For example, the musical instruments made by Year 6 show how the pupils have used a range of materials to create them.
69. Teaching seen in the two lessons was good. In the Year 4 lesson in design and technology, pupils were able to make moving monsters by using plastic syringes and tubes because of the clear explanation of 'pneumatic' and subject-specific vocabulary. In Year 6, teaching was effective in encouraging pupils to use self-evaluation to improve their work.
70. Art and design is used satisfactorily to support other areas of the curriculum; for example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have illustrated the twelve labours of Hercules in history. ICT is used well to produce greeting cards or illustrate poems in English.
71. Not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about overall provision in **music**. In the one lesson seen, standards were satisfactory. All Year 3 pupils are learning to play the recorder. They have learnt to play simple tunes and understand basic notation. Much of the music in the school is based around singing, which in an assembly was spontaneous, good and enthusiastic. Music plays a significant part in school life. There is tuition for a range of instruments including fife, clarinets, keyboards, violins and recorders. There is an annual carol concert and regular concerts performed by instrumentalists. Older pupils participate in a nativity event at Westminster Cathedral. Class assemblies involve singing. Staff are good role models in assemblies, joining in the singing with enthusiasm.
72. As no lessons were seen during the inspection it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in **physical education**. Pupils receive weekly lessons in physical education, which cover an appropriate range of indoor and outdoor activities. Pupils in Year 5 learn to swim, but no extra provision is made for those pupils who are unable to swim 25 metres at the end of the allocated time. There is some good extra-curricular provision including football coaching on two evenings per week by a qualified coach. These sessions are well attended as is basketball at lunchtimes arranged by a teaching assistant. Some support is given to teachers by staff from a local sports college. Opportunities for participation in competitive events is limited. However, the school holds a sports day on the adjacent astro-turf to which the school has open access. There is an annual residential experience for older pupils, which gives outdoor opportunities.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

73. It was only possible to observe one lesson in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and so no overall judgement about the quality of provision is possible. However, it is clear from the prominence of lessons on the timetable and from the range of experiences planned for pupils that the school sees this as an important subject. In the one lesson seen, good teaching made links with pupils' direct experience and citizenship. Here, pupils experienced democracy in action as they debated and voted on which piece of playground apparatus, that had been donated by a local charity, should be chosen. The teacher made successful use of real experiences to introduce pupils to abstract concepts, such as democracy. This typifies the school's approach to PSHE in which lessons are used to discuss important and often sensitive issues that are real to pupils. In addition, the curriculum is added to by programmes on sex and relationship education and on drugs misuse.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
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).*