

INSPECTION REPORT

Belmont Primary School

Chiswick, London

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102470

Headteacher: Mrs A Williams

Lead inspector: Alan Andrews

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 1st October 2003

Inspection number: 255484

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	479
School address:	Belmont Road Chiswick London
Postcode:	W4 5UL
Telephone number:	020 8994 7677
Fax number:	020 8742 7866
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Young
Date of previous inspection:	15 th -18 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Belmont School is situated in Chiswick within the London Borough of Hounslow. It is larger than most primary schools and housed in a three storey Victorian building with a hall on each floor. The school is over subscribed. Currently, there are 433 full-time children on roll aged four to eleven. In addition, 46 children attend part-time in the nursery. Overall, there are an equal number of girls and boys. The school has a high number of children, some 22 per cent, whose mother tongue is not English. There are 25 children at the early stages of English language acquisition. Children's attainment on entry to school is mainly above that expected nationally. The children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although the majority are White British. Other groups include Irish, African, Caribbean, Chinese as well as British Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children. There are no refugees, asylum seekers or Traveller children. The percentage of children identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties, but there are also children with speech or communication difficulties as well as those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are 10 children with a statement of special educational need. The percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Earlier this year the school received the Healthy School Award. It received Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6436	Alan Andrews	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector	
10090	Kath Beck	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics
7694	Martyn Richards	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language
32393	Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective and inclusive school. Children achieve very well and make really good progress because teaching overall is very good. The school ensures that all children do as well as they can. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Very good standards are also reached in music. The leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, is excellent. The school is managed very well on a daily basis. An imaginative and innovative curriculum promotes high levels of achievement. Partnership with parents is very good. The school provides very good value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The leadership provided by the headteacher and governing body is excellent and gives purpose and drive to the school.
- There is high achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- There is very good provision for special educational needs, English as an additional language and for brighter children.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage is very good. This enables children to make a really good start to school life.
- Teaching overall is very good. It is excellent in the nursery.
- The curriculum is broad and imaginative. It is designed to promote high achievement for all children.
- There is a highly effective partnership with parents.
- The range of opportunity for children to make and enjoy music is excellent.
- Information and communication technology is not yet used effectively enough in all subjects.

There have been very significant improvements in performance since the last inspection. Key issues for development identified in the inspection report have been tackled rigorously and effectively. The drive to improve standards has been strong and successful. The leadership provided by the headteacher and governing body has been central to this process.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	B	B	A	A

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

Children's achievements are **very good**. In the Foundation Stage many children are on course to exceed all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. They benefit from high quality teaching and achieve really well. At the infant and junior stages children are also achieving very well and standards are high, particularly in English, mathematics, science and music. Many children are working at higher levels than that expected nationally for their age. Those with special educational needs or English as an additional language often make very good progress. Standards in information and communication technology are average, but children are benefiting from new equipment and a broad programme of study. Together with good teaching, this means they are achieving well in lessons and progressing as fast as they can.

Children's attitudes to the school and their learning are very good. Behaviour is good in and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good** overall. Attendance is very good, as is punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education for its children. Teaching overall is **very good**. It is excellent in the nursery. All teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve and, as a result, their learning moves forward quickly. High priority is given successfully to promoting equal opportunities. Assessment procedures are of high quality and used very effectively to help plan children's programmes of work. Support staff are used really well to help children acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum provides a very good range of activities that motivate all children to want to learn. There are many opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision as well as the use of visits and of visitors. Music plays a very important and successful part in the life of the school. Children are cared for and supported very well. The school's partnership with parents is excellent and its links with the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors are **excellent**. The headteacher works very effectively with the governing body to provide excellent leadership. The daily management of the school is of really high quality and enables everyone to get on with their tasks successfully. The school development plan reflects its determination to go on improving. There is a very effective, senior management team that helps drive developments forward positively and quickly. The school analyses data very carefully so as to bring about improvements. High priority is given to staff development and training. This helps overcome the challenges of staff turnover.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents hold the school in very high regard. The children are very pleased to be at the school, knowing that they feel valued and helped to do well in their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- ensure that information and communication technology is used effectively in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the end of both the infant and junior stages are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Children are fully extended by the work presented to them and their achievements over time are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high standards in English, mathematics and science. This is reflected in the school's performance in national tests.
- Foundation Stage children make very good progress. Many will exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
- Children with English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve standards that are comparable with their classmates.
- Children identified as having special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their ability.
- Brighter children achieve high standards because they are challenged and extended well in lessons.
- Children reach very good standards in music and the subject plays an important part in the life of the school.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002 (2001)

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.4 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (14.5)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	19.1 (16.9)	16.5 (16.2)

There were [number] pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002 (2001)

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1 (30.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (28.5)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.3 (29.4)	28.3 (28.3)

There were [number] pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Over the period 2000 to 2002, the school's Year 2 results in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics have been mainly well above average. Indeed, the 2002 mathematics result was in the top five per cent nationally. In the same year a substantial percentage of the children reached the higher level in the reading and mathematics tests, more than double the national average in each subject area. In writing, the percentage of children reaching the higher level was above the national average, but the difference was not as marked as in reading and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the 2002 results were very high, in the top five per cent for both reading and

mathematics and well above average for writing. The overall picture is of a school doing very well at the infant stage.

2. The school's Year 6 results in national tests have also been very good. The 2002 results in English, mathematics and science were well above average when compared to all schools and when compared to those in a similar context. The percentage of children reaching the higher level was above the national average in all three subjects. As with the infant stage, the overall picture is of a school doing very well.

3. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented successfully and are having a positive impact on children's achievements in these subjects. The school analyses all its results in national tests carefully. It tracks the progress of individual children and responds positively to any emerging issues. It expects its results in the 2003 national tests to again be high.

4. The school is fully inclusive and caters for brighter as well as gifted and talented children very well. They achieve high standards because lessons include tasks offering them additional challenge. Many of the children speak English as an additional language and some are at an early stage in this learning. The provision made for them is very good and even better than at the time of the last inspection. The school celebrates the rich variety of home languages spoken with multi-lingual notices, displays and maps. These lead to a respect for other languages and cultures among the children. Most children become fluent and confident in spoken English by the time they leave the school. Reading and writing skills develop more slowly but still represent a very good rate of progress during children's time in school. By the ages of seven and eleven, their achievements are very good in English, mathematics and science and in line with those of their monolingual classmates. The achievements of children from different ethnic minority groups are comparable to those of the other children, while those with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their ability.

5. The nursery provides children with an excellent start to school life. Provision in the reception classes is of a high standard and, overall, children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. They achieve really well over time and, by the end of the reception year, most exceed all the national early learning goals set for them. Many successfully begin the early stages of the National Curriculum.

6. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work shows that, at the end of both the infant and junior stages, standards in all aspects of English, mathematics and science are well above that expected nationally. Children work really hard and are proud of their efforts. Knowledge, skills and understanding are built up in a systematic way. As a result, children's achievements over time are very good.

7. Lots of good opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. At the end of the infant stage, most children speak confidently and communicate meaning clearly. They listen attentively to others and use a wide range of vocabulary correctly. By Year 6 children speak fluently and often contribute sensibly to class discussions. They use their own experiences and knowledge successfully to illustrate points they want to make. They are polite and respectful when listening to others.

8. Reading plays an important part in children's lives and most read regularly at home as well as at school. They enjoy doing so and this helps their reading skills develop at a fast rate. Infant children have favourite stories and talk enthusiastically about main characters and story lines. In Year 2, most children read confidently and with an increasing emphasis on expression. Older children undertake a wide range of reading and, in Year 6, many are able to read complex texts fluently and with understanding.

9. Children make very good progress in the development of their writing skills. They write for a range of purposes and benefit from opportunities to do so across the curriculum. They quickly learn to set out ideas in sequence and, as they move up through the school, they begin to extend them in an interesting way. In Year 2, children use simple punctuation and grammar correctly. Their use of

vocabulary is of a high standard and spelling is usually very good. Older children continue to build up their writing skills effectively so that in Year 6 many have a very good knowledge of grammatical structure. Their writing often shows imagination and flair with handwriting and spelling of a high order.

10. Children's learning in mathematics is made really meaningful because it is often linked effectively to everyday life. A good mix of oral and practical work helps them achieve at a fast rate. Infant children quickly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of the four rules of number and how to apply them accurately. Throughout the school, attention is given to the development of children's mental recall of numbers and they learn to do so rapidly. Year 6 children can solve complex mathematical problems independently.

11. In science, very good attention is paid to the development of investigative skills. Infant children observe the results of their experiments carefully and make good diagrams to show what they have done. Early achievements are consolidated and extended very well, so that in Year 6 children are able to focus successfully on scientific processes, such as prediction, the control of variables and the interpretation of results.

12. Standards in music are very good. The subject plays a significant part in the life of the school and children are presented with a wide and exciting range of musical experiences. As a result, they progress extremely well and often produce music of a high quality. Standards in religious education are above that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Children's learning has benefited from close links with the local community. Standards in design and technology, art and design, geography, history and physical education are all good. Programmes of work successfully develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding so that their achievements over time are good. Standards in information and communication technology are typical of those found nationally at the end of both the infant and junior stages. However, children are making sound progress because they are benefiting from improved resources and a broader programme of study.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes to the school and their learning are very good. Behaviour is good in and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall. Attendance is very good, as is children's punctuality.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's very good attitudes to learning help them make very good progress because they enter lessons wanting to learn.
- The good behaviour of the children is an improvement on the last inspection.
- Children enjoy very good relationships with each other and staff, leading to a racially harmonious community.
- Attendance is very good and an improvement on the last inspection. A few parents continue to take family holidays during term time.

Commentary

13. There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Children are polite, listen attentively and have very good attitudes towards their learning. They respond with real enthusiasm in their work across all areas of the curriculum. Good examples included a Year 4 history lesson on the Tudors. All the children were very knowledgeable about the life of King Henry VIII and were eager to share their information with others. This led to lively discussions and stimulating teaching where everyone concerned benefited.

14. Behaviour is usually very good when children come together for assemblies or for lunch. The children themselves say that other children are well behaved and friendly. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare indeed and, if they do occur, the school's handling of them is prompt and effective.

15. The school's promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony is excellent. Children and staff work together really well creating a very strong sense of community. The school sets very high expectations for children's conduct and works successfully to ensure these standards are maintained.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2001/2

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

16. The school has tried hard to deter some parents from taking family holidays during term time. This has had a positive effect on attendance rates which are now well above the national average for similar schools. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. The response to questionnaires to children and parents show that, almost without exception, children like coming to school. Punctuality is very good. The youngest children are settled and leave their parents or carers happily. Children from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language, show the same positive attitudes to school as their classmates.

17. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this is an improvement on the last inspection. In assemblies and in lessons, children refine their understanding of right and wrong, learn to appreciate the feelings and values of others and to respect individual differences. Spiritual development is fostered when children are helped to appreciate the world around them and when they become totally engrossed in lessons such as music and literacy. Social skills are developed effectively as children learn to work collaboratively, to take responsibility for daily tasks and to participate in the democratic processes of the school council. Residential trips for older children give valuable experiences of community life away from home, while the school's good programme of support for charities leads to an appreciation of social responsibilities in a wider world. A very good programme of cultural activity, including drama, music and art, enriches children's cultural experiences.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. The quality of teaching is very good and the curriculum is also very good. The school provides excellent opportunities to enrich and enliven children's learning. Its provision for children's care, welfare, health and safety is very good and the partnership with parents is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment of children's progress is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the nursery is excellent.
- Teaching in the reception classes is very good. It is also very good overall at the infant and junior stages.
- The teaching of children with English as an additional language or special educational needs is very good.
- Brighter children are very well challenged and extended.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution to children's learning.
- The school's assessment procedures are very good and used effectively to help plan and deliver lessons.

- Teachers need to make more use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(3.6%)	22 (40%)	21(38.2%)	8(14.6%)	2(3.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

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

18. The quality of teaching overall is very good and enables children to learn quickly. In more than three quarters of the lessons observed the teaching was at least good and in nearly half the lessons seen it was very good or better. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be good. Lessons are planned to take full account of children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Children from ethnic minority groups play a full part in lessons. The work set for brighter children provides them with appropriate additional challenge so that they make very good progress in their learning. The school makes very good use of visitors to enrich children's work in lessons, for example a visiting speaker talking about life in Victorian times.

19. Teaching in the nursery is excellent and a major factor in enabling children in their first week at school to settle quickly and happily. The nursery teacher is very knowledgeable about the needs of young children and how they learn best. She uses her expertise extremely well. Children are presented with a really exciting learning environment that stimulates them to want to get involved. Resources and activities are very well organised and planned so as to capture children's interest and imagination. They are given many opportunities for learning that successfully promote high levels of achievement in all the areas of learning. Relationships are very good indeed and this helps children to have fun while they are learning. Support staff are deployed really effectively and make a valuable contribution to children's progress.

20. Teaching in the reception classes is very good and builds successfully on the children's nursery experiences. Planning is usually detailed and there are imaginative activities for children to do. Teachers have high expectations of what can be achieved and many children will exceed all the early learning goals by the end of the year and move on successfully to the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children's skills, knowledge and understanding are developed really well, especially their ability to make choices for themselves and to work on their own. Support staff are deployed very effectively so as to help children achieve as well as they can.

21. At the infant and junior stages very good teaching was seen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as in art and design, geography, history and music. In all subjects, lesson planning is detailed and thorough so that teachers know what they intend children to learn and how. Resources are prepared carefully and tasks are usually well matched to children's needs, although not enough use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Lessons begin promptly and include a good mix of direct teaching and practical work. Support staff make a valuable contribution to children's achievements. Homework is used very effectively to reinforce and extend children's learning. In the best lessons, there is a sense of real purpose, expectations of what children can achieve are high and they are often fully engrossed in the tasks set. Their behaviour and attitudes towards work are very good and this has a positive impact on their progress. In a small number of lessons seen there were weaknesses in teaching mainly because children were not always kept on task and the work set did not build sufficiently well on previous learning.

22. The quality of teaching for children for whom English is an additional language is very good. In lessons, whatever the subject, teachers regularly try to maximise the opportunity for children to talk rather than simply listen. When necessary, lessons are planned so that children learning English as an additional language work in a small group with a skilled classroom assistant. They cover the same subject matter as others in their class, but with more opportunity to use extended and explicit forms of English than is possible in the larger group. Classroom assistants are on hand in other lessons to help any children who have difficulty with the language, making sure that weaknesses in English do not hinder learning in other subjects. On occasions, children work in small groups outside the classroom, taught by the local authority's visiting teacher for English as an additional language. Her visits did not coincide with the inspection so it is not possible to evaluate the quality of this aspect of the teaching. It is clear, however, that the work is carefully planned and based securely on each child's individual language needs. Precise targets are set for every pupil and are reviewed and adjusted frequently to ensure they move ahead as quickly as possible. The previous inspection report noted difficulties in the school's relationship with the external support service. These have now been resolved and the school makes good use of the support available to it.

23. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good. The provision for these children relies heavily on in class support and the use of teaching assistants, although the special needs coordinator withdraws a small number of junior children for group work in literacy and numeracy. The system works very well and enables children to experience success. Relationships are very good and, as a result, children are keen to please and to do their best. Care is taken over the setting of individual targets for improvement. They show precise identification of particular needs and are used effectively to help plan and deliver lessons.

24. The school's assessment procedures are very good and used well to plan work that meets children's needs. Children's progress is tracked carefully and individual targets for improvement are shared with parents. Emphasis is rightly placed on the early identification of children with learning difficulties. The tracking of children with English as an additional language is of high quality so that they are enabled quickly to achieve in line with their classmates. Throughout the school, children's work is marked regularly with constructive comments to help them know how to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6 is imaginative and innovative, promoting high levels of achievement. In all year groups the curriculum provides interesting and challenging experiences. The accommodation, resources and very good quality staff, support the curriculum very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad range of really worthwhile activities that motivate children to want to learn in all year groups.
- All children benefit, according to their needs, from the excellence of the school's provision.
- There are many opportunities for enrichment through extra curricular provision, use of visits and visitors to the school.
- Very good use of staffing, accommodation and resources allow children to achieve high standards for the children.
- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support children's learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The curriculum in all year groups is imaginative and designed to promote high achievement. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was a key issue for action. The school has recently introduced a wide range of new teaching and learning strategies that take into

account children's different learning styles. Children are engaged in a wide range of activities that include, practical investigation, problem solving, discussion, writing, reading, art, music and sports. Teachers throughout the school place strong emphasis on children's personal development. Children's work shows that they have many opportunities to use their initiative and express their own points of view. Foundation Stage children move happily between activities, some of which are teacher led and others that they initiate for themselves. Expertise within and from outside the school is used very well to enrich the curriculum. For example, during the inspection a visitor took on the role of a Victorian person and by remaining in role, taught the children much about life at that time. Parents assist children with theatrical events, such as Shakespearean plays and musical evenings.

26. The curriculum is planned really thoroughly. In the Foundation Stage, work covers all the areas of learning and then challenges children to begin the early stages of the National Curriculum. In Years 1 to 6, all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. Statutory requirements are met in the curriculum and in the provision of a collective act of worship. The presentation of each subject or area of learning is evaluated regularly by staff, led by the curriculum leaders and senior management team.

27. Children are prepared very well for subsequent stages of education. They reach high standards, have highly developed attitudes to learning and are confident in their abilities. Programmes of work help children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding year on year. Teachers make very good use of assessment procedures. They know the children well and prepare work that meets individual needs, challenging them to do as well as they can.

28. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Emphasis is placed on the early identification of such children and an analysis of their learning difficulties. Care is taken over the construction of specific targets for them to achieve. The targets are precise, realistic and reviewed regularly. Children's self-esteem is maintained well and they take part fully in class activities. Recent changes in the national Code of Practice for children with special educational needs have been implemented successfully. The special needs coordinator liaises with outside agencies and the children benefit from this.

29. The school makes very good provision for children learning English as an additional language and this enables them to play a full part in lessons. This provision results in very good progress. A large number of children come from ethnic minority groups. The school has a very effective racial awareness policy which it implements well. It is a friendly and racially harmonious community and the inspection found no evidence whatever of racial intolerance or insensitivity. Staff regularly check the progress made by ethnic minority children to ensure they make good headway in their learning. This careful monitoring is very effective and results in the children reaching similarly high standards to their classmates.

30. While children with disabilities enjoy the full range of the school curriculum and the governors have taken action to improve disabled access, more remains to be done. Despite the difficulties of a three storey building, the disability plan in process of implementation will bring further improvements in this area.

31. Particularly able, gifted and talented children are identified. Their progress is also checked regularly and additional learning challenges often arranged for them. Their achievements are now very good and have improved markedly since the last inspection. National assessments and tests over several years show there has been no sustained or significant disadvantage to children of either gender. This corrects an imbalance noted at the last inspection, where significantly more girls than boys reached the higher levels of the tests.

32. The school provides a rich and varied programme of experiences for many of the children outside the school day. They participate in many sports, musical and dramatic activities. Some of these activities are provided by experts in their field. Sports coaches do much to add to the children's skills in rugby, basketball and football.

33. There is a good number of teaching and support staff with the correct qualifications and a range of expertise to meet the needs of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage staff are experienced and very knowledgeable about children of this age. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants complement the work of class teachers very well. They offer much support to all the children, but especially those with English as an additional language or with special educational needs, to ensure they make very good progress.

34. The school is almost 100 years old. It has undergone substantial refurbishment in recent months. This means the indoor and outdoor areas are safe and pleasant places to be. Money to do this came from the school and from particular grants. The nursery has excellent accommodation designed especially for very young children. The classrooms are smaller in the reception classes and limits children's initiative as they move around the room. There are specialist facilities for information and communication technology, special educational needs, music, reading recovery and resources that are used effectively to raise standards. Teachers use resources very well to help children learn. Visitors and visits to places of interest do much to broaden the curriculum and promote learning in art, drama, music, history and geography.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures children's care, welfare, health and safety very well. It provides them with very effective support and guidance and involves them well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children's care, welfare and guidance.
- Very good and trusting relationships with staff.
- Children's interests are placed first.

Commentary

35. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. Formal written risk assessments are carried out on the premises, equipment and school trips. The school, parents and other agencies work together effectively. Good maintenance ensures the building and equipment are kept in a clean and safe condition. Hazards are minimised or eliminated and the school promotes healthy living. Children spoke very positively about the "buddies" system and the way it helps those who might feel lonely, particularly at play and lunchtimes. Children told inspectors how happy they were in the school and it was evident that this made them want to do their best.

36. Children feel they are able to go to most members of staff and discuss any concerns or worries that they might have. Teachers and other staff know the children very well and recognise their needs. They act quickly if a child is unhappy or under pressure and are particularly careful to ensure new arrivals are helped to settle in. Those children with special educational needs are very well supported by individual teaching assistants and enjoy very trusting relationships. Staff have a very good understanding of children's achievements and their development is based on comprehensive, ongoing assessment procedures. Children in the nursery and reception classes are supported well by the very good induction programmes.

37. The school council, consisting of children from all year groups, has discussions with the headteacher on issues, such as the amount of homework that is issued by staff. This has resulted in a review by children of the homework arrangements. Matters raised by the council have been of concern to all members, young and old alike. All are good at articulating the views of their year group members. Children believe that their views matter and that they are valued.

38. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive very good support in the school. Their progress is checked regularly and very effective extra help made available when necessary.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are excellent. There is a highly effective partnership with parents who think very highly of the school. There are very good links with the community and very effective relationships with other neighbouring schools. Parents are provided with excellent information about their child's progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information to parents is outstanding.
- Parents' views are sought at regular intervals.
- The contribution made by parents to their children's learning both at home and in school is excellent.

Commentary

39. The school makes excellent efforts to involve parents and to inform them about their child's standards and progress. There is comprehensive curriculum information accompanied by school and parent-teacher newsletters. The end of year academic reports that parents receive about their child's progress are of the highest quality. Attainment levels, what a child can and cannot do and targets to aim for are clearly outlined. This is helping to raise standards. The school prospectus is an impressive document and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

40. The parents are consulted and their views sought regularly on a range of issues revolving around the school improvement plan. Any suggestions parents make are taken seriously and acted upon. Concerns or complaints that parents may have are dealt with very effectively. Parents are proud of the school and its achievements. They show strong support and most of them participate in its life and work. The parents association is a thriving organisation that regularly raises funds for school resources.

41. There is a comprehensive sharing of information about children, their play, learning and behaviour and how they can be supported at home. Staff work very closely with parents to meet the educational needs of their children. Parents respond by making an outstanding contribution to their children's learning. A high number come into school to help with projects, the library and listening to children read. Almost without exception, parents help with their child's work at home and this is having a really positive effect on children's achievements.

42. The school builds close relationships with parents of children learning English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. It makes translation facilities available for parents' evenings and meetings to review individual children's progress. It also gives parents advice about how they can best help their children. While parents from ethnic minority groups support parent evenings and school events very well, the governors have found difficulty in recruiting them into governorship. Serious efforts have been made to remedy this imbalance, but more needs to be done if the governors are to be fully representative of the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff in partnership with the governing body are very good. They are major factors in raising and maintaining high standards within a rich and stimulating curriculum and overcoming the barriers to achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent leadership by the headteacher and the senior management team with very clear lines of communication.

- The governance of the school is of high quality.
- There is excellent management that reflects a school with ambition.
- The use of many resources to overcome the challenges of staff turnover and sustain high standards is very good.

Commentary

43. The leadership, management and governance of the school have improved a great deal since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in 2000 and immediately established a very clear educational direction for the school that focused on raising children's achievements and standards of attainment. A school development plan was written, containing sharp targets for improvement that could be monitored easily by senior staff and governors. A very effective senior management team was established to drive developments forward positively and quickly. Foundation Stage and 'floor leaders' were appointed, all with clear responsibilities. Together with the senior management team, this established very clear lines of communication. Staff confidence and self-esteem was enhanced when teachers were allocated responsibilities and allowed to do the job they had been given. Review meetings were held frequently to assess progress and agree the next steps. All were manageable and achievable in short periods of time. Teaching and learning, especially in English, mathematics and science, were monitored closely. Examples of good practice were shared with other staff. Weaknesses were identified and dealt with through staff training so that the quality of teaching was raised. Strong emphasis was placed on simple, but very effective, assessment systems to track children's progress, developing a broad and exciting curriculum and improving the accommodation. This enthused children so that they wanted to come to school and learn in an exciting and stimulating environment. The headteacher attracted considerable additional funds to the school to bring about such improvements.

44. Many of the procedures established in 2000-2001 are now embedded in the school's practice. It is very active in ensuring high standards are sustained. There is a very clear view among all the staff and governors of the need to ensure children achieve as well as they can. They share the high aspirations of the headteacher. The school development plan reflects the school's ambitions for its children and is exploring ways to make school even better for them. Minutes of senior management team meetings show that decision making is a sharp process with emphasis on priorities. Strengths are recognised and weaknesses dealt with quickly. Developments are linked to ensure that whole school targets for the number of children to reach Level 4 and Level 5 in national tests are exceeded. The school is fully inclusive. Data is analysed thoroughly to ensure all children are making the progress they should and that there is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls or between different ethnic groups. Targets are set for all the groups in school. These are conveyed very effectively to staff, who then review children's progress twice each term. In addition, the headteacher looks closely at the value added data available to the school about children's achievements between the infants and the juniors. This is very good.

45. There are excellent self-evaluation, performance management and staff development procedures that help to identify and bring about further improvements. These too are linked to the school's priorities. All senior managers have attended leadership courses to give them high level skills that they apply each day, inspiring staff and children to do their best. This has ensured that children learn through a broad, rich and varied curriculum. Expertise within the school is utilised fully and staff responsibilities are allocated accordingly. Other skills in music, art, drama, dance and sport are brought into the school by experts in their field. Children find success in subjects other than English and mathematics and this raises their self esteem, giving them a more positive attitude to subjects they find difficult. As a result, they achieve more.

46. Senior staff manage the English as an additional language programme very well. Lessons are monitored to see that children's targets are being met. Booster and lunchtime classes are available for children needing additional support. Good links are maintained with the children's families and translation facilities are readily available at review meetings or parents' evenings. This means school and home can work together for the children's benefit. The school has acquired a

good range of equipment and materials for teaching in this area and has provided appropriate staff training.

47. There are many new governors who have considerable expertise in finance, law, media and education. They use these skills to benefit the school and its children. Together with the headteacher and senior management team, they make major contributions to the school development plan that shapes the vision and direction of the school. Governors have a very clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses and are anxious to improve the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. They make decisions on an informed basis, visiting the school, following up links with classes, analysing data and monitoring finances. To overcome difficulties in staffing, governors have a clear recruitment and retention policy. This means that experienced staff stay at the school and good quality new teachers are recruited in an area of expensive housing.

48. Parental involvement, dedicated staff, thorough planning and assessment systems, together with children who enjoy what they do, are among the school's aids to learning. Many parents help children learn to read during the school day and support their child's learning at home through homework. The views of parents are sought to identify improvements in the school. Views are listened to carefully and taken into account. Planning and assessment systems are thorough. They are simple and sharply focused leaving time for staff to concentrate on their teaching. The school overcomes the challenges of staff turnover successfully. This impacts the role of the curriculum leader more than the achievements of the children. The procedures for the recruitment and induction of staff, training and development of their skills means teachers soon become effective in their responsibilities.

49. The governors and headteacher ensure that the budget reflects the school's educational priorities. Very good financial procedures are in place and there is careful monitoring of the financial position during the year. The principles of best value are applied fully to all aspects of the school. This has resulted in high standards of achievement, a very rich and worthwhile curriculum, very good teaching and high quality leadership, management and governance. The school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the nursery in the term after which they become four. Provision in the nursery is **excellent**. This is because teaching and learning promote very high levels of achievement in very young children in all of the areas of learning. Accommodation and resources are all of high quality. They are used very effectively by staff to help children to become independent, make important choices about their work and learn through a wide variety of challenging and exciting play activities.

Provision is **very good** in the reception classes. Attainment on entry to the school is good. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in all the areas of learning. As a result, many children at the end of their reception year exceed the early learning goals set for them. The classrooms for this age group are smaller and rather cramped, hampering the ease with which children can move from teacher led to child initiated activities. The outside area is used effectively, but large heavy doors make it hard for children to move in and out without adult supervision.

Common features of the high quality teaching and learning include:

- excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the ways children of this age learn so that children learn a lot from one activity;
- planning for exciting activities at different levels of the stepping stones or early stages of the National Curriculum that engage children, encouraging them to talk and learn a lot;
- very effective teaching methods, use of resources and deployment of adult support so that children achieve as well as they can;
- the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding, especially their capacity to work on their own or with others;
- thorough assessment of what children know and can do so that activities are planned to meet individual needs;
- the children's very good attitudes and enthusiasm for learning;
- the promotion of high standards of behaviour.

50. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. All the staff in the nursery and reception classes work very closely together evaluating their work to bring about improvements. The refurbishment of the nursery was considered carefully. The rooms have been designed to meet the needs of the children and the curriculum. All the equipment, work surfaces and tables are at the right height for the children. They are colourful and provide very attractive areas in which to learn. The leadership is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is innovative, taking into account the many different ways in which children learn. It is very practical and relevant to children of this age. This allows all children, including those with English as an additional language, special educational needs and the higher attaining children, to achieve as well as they can. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was said that the higher attaining children were not challenged enough in their work and those with English as an additional language did not receive enough support.

Example of outstanding practice

A nursery activity that includes skills from all the areas of learning and promotes real joy in learning

As soon as I walked into the nursery, I knew children were finding sheer joy in learning. The water trough was full of green coloured water, hiding treasures to fish for. Eyes nearly popped out of heads as 'Jo' fished out a large toy lobster with a tiny net. Squeals of excitement and fun followed as the lobster's many legs tickled hands. 'Ahmed' and friends paused, thought for a minute as they looked at the difference in size of the lobster and the net. They giggled some more when 'Ahmed' said, "It won't go in my net!" The lobster was returned to the water and a larger net found. More squeals of delight as the lobster emerged once more from the deep. Few children had seen such a creature before. The nursery nurse watched the awe and wonder on the children's faces, explaining gently as the excitement cooled, that lobsters live in the sea and that some people liked to eat them. The fun captured the interest of others nearby who watched fascinated, hesitant at the sight of this strange creature. Clasp the nursery nurse's hand for confidence and courage, 'Amy's' curiosity got the better of her and she just had to touch it too and giggle with the others. Eventually the lobster, shiny jewels and tiny fish were returned to their watery homes. The children's curiosity satisfied, they hung up their aprons and looked around, taking time to select the next exciting thing to do.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good** so that many children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The nursery children exhibit curiosity and are eager for new experiences.
- The development of independence skills is very good
- Reception children are confident to try new activities and talk in groups.
- All children form good relationships with adults and their classmates, working together harmoniously.

Commentary

51. At the time of the inspection many children were new to the nursery. Staff have set up a range of interesting activities, such as dinosaurs in the sand, half built models, road tracks with cars, fire engines and an ambulance. They have set them up in such a way as to help children exhibit curiosity, capture interest and invite creative play. This helps children to leave their carer happily and quickly. Many other activities in and out of the classroom satisfy their eagerness for new experiences as they are enabled to move freely from one activity to another. Nursery staff offer exemplary role models to the children in their discussions with them, inviting the children to play together or spend time on activities on their own. Routines have been quickly established. From the first day children were invited to take responsibility for putting on and taking off aprons to play in the water or paint a picture. When a child forgot, the question, "*What do you have to do with the apron when you have finished playing in the water?*" made the child think hard and remember where to hang it up.

52. Reception children are very confident and work happily on a task on their own or together leaving the teacher free to work with a particular group. For example, children painted pictures with water colours and were engrossed in what they were doing. They took the initiative to mix colours and explore the medium to get the best results. Others tried to write a book using their developing writing skills. They were very confident to try out what they knew, knowing that their teacher would value their efforts and praise them.

53. In all the lessons observed in the nursery and reception classes, children worked together harmoniously, helping each other, sharing their ideas or playing happily together in the home corner. They completed jigsaw puzzles together, shared books and talked to their teachers animatedly about their work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good** so that many children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills so that they communicate very effectively.
- Children are encouraged to try out their knowledge in writing at a very early stage. This gives them confidence to write short stories by the end of the reception year.
- The classroom displays and the partnership with parents help children to recognise sounds and words so that they learn to read quickly

Commentary -

54. In the nursery and reception classes, speaking and listening skills are developed very well through activities, such as role-play in the home corner and office, or as police officers, firefighters, or as characters in traditional stories. Visits to places of interest provoke much discussion. Adults play alongside the children in their play to extend their vocabulary and model conversations and discussions. They use the correct vocabulary that helps all children to communicate very effectively and confidently, especially those with English as an additional language.

55. Activities, such as playing in the office, supermarket, hospital or pretending to be a story writer, or writing letters for *Postman Pat* to deliver, stimulate children to write from their imagination and also drawing on their wide range of vocabulary. Staff encourage the children to try and write things for themselves at a very early stage so that they understand writing is an important way to communicate. By the end of the reception year, many write interesting short stories with very good letter formation and accurate spelling.

56. Children love learning to read. Stories from a range of cultures, as well as traditional Western European stories that are familiar to the children, are used to gain children's interest in the printed word. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to browse through books and tell each other stories from the pictures. Staff share imaginative stories with the children who also listen to taped stories, following them in books. Children soon learn about the sounds letters make and use them to try and read new words. Parent helpers visit frequently to share books with children and help them to practise their skills and gain confidence. This support, as well as that given by parents at home, helps children to learn to read quickly and confidently at the early level of the National Curriculum by the time they complete their reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good** and helps children achieve very well so that they exceed the early learning goals at the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many practical activities that help children to enjoy learning.

Commentary

57. Children in the nursery hardly knew they were learning about numbers when they were comparing the different size fishing nets they were playing with. Their conversation included, *bigger than, smaller than*. When they counted up the treasures they had caught, they knew how to count to 10 or more and who had *more treasures or less treasures*. In the reception classes, staff build on

this and use their detailed assessments to set work that is appropriate to children's abilities. Games, such as hopscotch give children the chance to learn to sequence numbers and use words such as, *more, less, add, subtract* in a fun way. Brighter children know how to add and subtract to 20, recognise two dimensional shapes, measure accurately using standard measures and calculate simple money sums. This rapid achievement stems from stories such as, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Children grew runner beans and measured them, as well as each comparing their height to the giant! Games, role-play and formal recording of simple sums do much to help the children achieve as well as they can.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**. Many children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals at the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a really exciting curriculum that promotes high levels of achievement.

Commentary

58. In the nursery, children enjoy many exciting experiences that help them to find out about the world around them. Photographs show them wearing Wellington boots and exploring a large puddle of water. Another shows the awe and wonder found by walking on freshly fallen snow or looking at the effects of a severe frost. Smelling and tasting tea, chocolate and herbs, as well as cooking porridge, popcorn and cakes teaches them much about their senses, likes and dislikes. These activities also teach them a lot about what happens when different foods are mixed and heated.

59. In the reception classes, children achieve well in learning about plants and flowers. Earlier in the year, they picked daffodils and drew them really well. They designed and made high quality underwater scenes from shoe boxes and all kinds of recyclable materials. They also evaluated their designs, learning much about life under the sea as well as the design and making processes. Parents helped the children to understand the ceremonies associated with *Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year*. This is part of a detailed programme to help children develop a very good understanding of different faiths and cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**. Many children exceed the early learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned curriculum promotes very good achievement.

Commentary

60. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes gives children the chance to develop their dexterity by moulding their name in malleable materials, rolling out and shaping pastry, dough or clay and writing and constructing models from a wide range of materials and toys. They handle tools, such as scissors and other objects with increasing control. Outside, children ride tricycles, climb, slide, play with hoops, balls and skipping ropes. Indoor activities, such as dance and lessons using the gymnastics apparatus, helps them to balance, travel along, move around, climb, roll and show awareness of space. Many children move with confidence, imagination and in safety.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good** so that many children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception classes are encouraged to use their initiative to enable them to achieve very well.

Commentary

61. Examples and photographs of paintings, clay work, paper sculpture, collage and paper weaving show that many children express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings confidently through their art work, design and technology. Hand and foot printing did much to enhance understanding of their senses. Role-play activities, including dressing up as different characters and performing in the school's theatre, promotes real achievement in the use of imagination and communication of ideas. Listening to music, singing, composing, playing instruments, such as the piano and xylophone and making instruments helps children to explore and understand different sounds and the pleasure music making brings. Often, children use information and communication technology to draw pictures or play games to enhance their knowledge in other areas of learning in a creative way. In this area, children's individuality shines.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Children achieve very well over time.
- Programmes of work are varied and interesting. They cover all aspects of the curriculum and successfully reflect the children's wide cultural experiences.
- Teaching is often very good.

Commentary

62. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work shows that standards in all aspects of English are well above that expected nationally at the end of both the infant and junior stages. This represents a significant improvement since the school's last inspection when standards overall were judged to match the national average at the end of the infant stage and to be above average at the end of the junior stage. These improvements have come about because of determined efforts to raise standards together with high expectations of what children can achieve.

63. The school's results in national tests since 1999 for children aged seven and eleven reflect its success in raising and consistently maintaining high standards. The 2002 results in reading and writing were well above average at the infant stage as were the overall English results at the junior stage. The percentage of children reaching higher levels in the tests was better than the national scene at both stages. When compared to schools in a similar context, the 2002 results were also well above the average. Indeed, the reading result for children aged seven was in the top five per cent. The school justifiably expects that its 2003 results in national tests will present much the same picture.

64. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work together show that children's achievements over time are very good, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Brighter children are also challenged and extended really well. The national initiative on literacy has been introduced successfully and is playing an important part in helping to maintain high standards. Children in Years 4 to 6 are placed in ability sets for literacy lessons and sometimes the most able pupils are grouped with older children. Programmes of work are varied and appeal to children's interests. Class texts are chosen to reflect the children's wide cultural experiences and this often gives them added meaning. Homework is used regularly and effectively to enrich and extend what is done in lessons.

65. Most children at the end of the infant stage speak confidently and communicate meaning very clearly. They listen attentively, respond correctly to directions and answer questions really well. This means time in lessons is used productively and work usually moves forward at a good pace. Many children are able to offer opinions and express preferences. They use a wide range of vocabulary well, for example when describing characters from stories they have read. At the end of the junior stage, most children talk enthusiastically about their work and interests. They are prepared to pose questions during discussions, but also listen respectfully to others. Many express ideas fluently, often using their own experiences and knowledge skilfully to illustrate particular points.

66. Children enjoy books and reading plays an important part in their lives, both at home and at school. Reading records are used effectively as a means of dialogue between parent, teacher and child. Many parents make helpful written comments in the records. Junior children are encouraged to use the records as an opportunity to review what they are reading. The system is beneficial because it encourages children to read and helps them know how to improve. Teachers give

appropriate emphasis to the acquisition of reading skills. They encourage the use of letter sounds to tackle unusual, new or difficult words and this is clearly paying dividends because children make very good progress. It also impacts positively upon their spelling. At the end of the infant stage most children read confidently and with an increasing emphasis on expression. Many have favourite stories and show good understanding of main characters and story lines. Older children undertake a wide range of reading and, at the end of the junior stage, most read fluently and with expression. They often explore complexities of plot, character and motive well. They have a wide knowledge of children's literature and their own favourite authors. Their research skills are very good. They understand the library catalogue system and locate and summarise information well. At both the infant and junior stages children make regular use of dictionaries and the thesaurus to aid reading and writing.

67. Children write successfully and imaginatively for a wide range of purposes. A considerable amount of work has been accomplished since the beginning of term. The daily literacy hour is lengthened when appropriate to provide additional time for extended writing. This is clearly having a positive impact on standards. Individual targets are set out at the front of children's work books. They are realistic and monitored closely. At the end of the infant stage many children use simple grammar and punctuation correctly. Ideas are developed in sequence and often extended in an interesting way. Use of vocabulary is of a high standard and spelling is usually very good. Older children build effectively on their writing skills and at the end of the junior stage many have a very good knowledge and understanding of grammatical structure. They plan their work carefully and the results often show very good imagination as well as the ability to communicate ideas clearly. Handwriting and spelling is often of a high order and work is usually very neatly presented.

68. The structure provided by the literacy hour has given teachers clear guidelines about the organisation of lessons and this is proving beneficial. In the lessons observed the teaching was never less than satisfactory and in almost half of those seen it was very good. Lesson planning is detailed and there is a clear expectation that children will work hard and consistently do their best. Relationships are very good and activities are explained and presented well. This helps ensure that work moves forward at a brisk pace. There are reminders about previous work and how it links with what is to be done next. Teachers use questions effectively to assess what children understand as well as challenge them to think hard and contribute their ideas. Very good use is made of support staff to help children who need it most. All children have really good attitudes towards the subject and behave very well. This has a positive impact on their progress.

69. The coordination of the subject is going through a period of change. The teacher responsible for the infant stage for the past year is currently also overseeing work in the junior stage to allow a new subject leader for that age group to settle in gradually. The more established subject leader sees teachers' planning and scrutinises children's work with written and verbal feedback to class teachers. Her experience in the role is, as yet, limited, but she has the potential to lead well. Resources for the subject are very good and include two libraries, one each for the infant and junior stages. Parents have been very generous in their financial support for the purchase of library books.

70. Displays of children's written work around the school are often of very good quality. They celebrate their achievements really well. Good use is also made of visiting authors, theatre groups and Book Weeks to enrich and widen children's learning experiences.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. Very good use is made of language and literacy across the curriculum and children benefit from this. They have many opportunities to read, discuss and write about what they are doing in subjects such as science, religious education, history and geography. This helps consolidate and build their knowledge, skills and understanding of this area of their work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are much higher standards than at the time of the last inspection brought about by very good teaching.
- There is thorough coverage of all aspects of the curriculum so that children become confident mathematicians.
- There is excellent curriculum leadership that promotes high standards.

Commentary

72. Lessons in mathematics were observed in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6. The work of all age groups was scrutinised.

73. In 2002, results in national tests taken by children aged eleven, were very high in comparison to all and similar schools. They were even better in 2003 as over half the children taking the tests reached Level 5, which is many more than in most schools. The school often exceeds the challenging targets it sets for the number of children to reach Levels 4 and 5.

74. In 2002, results in national tests taken by children at the age of seven were very high and placed the school in the top five per cent nationally. They are not quite as high this year, but the school was expecting this because there were more children with special educational needs in the year group.

75. The school's overall results in national tests are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is because all groups of children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language as well as brighter children, are challenged to achieve as well as they can. There is a detailed and well constructed programme of work. Teachers mark children's efforts carefully giving a clear indication of what they can do and how to correct their errors. This information is used effectively by teachers to provide tasks that are closely matched to individual needs. In Years 4 to 6, children are put into sets according to their ability. Within these ability groups, work is again set according to different needs. High expectations mean all children are challenged to work hard and cover as much ground in each lesson as possible. Teachers set short term targets for children to work towards. These help the children and their parents, know how well they are doing and what needs to be learned next. Homework is used very effectively to speed up the rate of progress. It builds on work completed in class and is also matched to children's needs.

76. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subject and their enthusiasm is communicated really well to the children. All aspects of the curriculum, including investigations and problem solving, are taught thoroughly. Learning is made really purposeful as work is linked to children's experiences and daily life. Teachers give very clear explanations and clues to solve problems easily and quickly. This helps children to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding of the four rules of number and how to apply them accurately. By Year 6, children are solving complex problems independently. High standards of behaviour and very good attitudes to learning mean children work productively. Their exercise books show pride and care in the presentation of their tasks. By setting out their sums carefully they can work accurately. All lessons have a clear structure and begin with a reminder of what children have learned before. Another section develops children's mental recall of numbers rapidly. Teachers give clear explanations of what is to be done and ensure that there is plenty of practical work. At the end of each lesson, teachers assess what children have learned and explain how this links to the next lesson. Teachers vary the activities so that children sometimes work independently and at other times collaboratively in groups. Adult support is used very effectively to help children to achieve as well as they can in each lesson.

77. The very high quality of leadership in mathematics has brought about high levels of achievement across the school. This has been done by creating very effective teams of teachers in each year group. Each team has a very clear understanding of what has to be taught, when and how. They acknowledge their responsibility in helping the children to achieve really well throughout their time in the school. The quality of teaching and learning are monitored carefully and weaknesses remedied quickly. Two leading mathematics teachers demonstrate their skills and share their expertise in a very supportive way that boosts teachers' confidence.

78. Children's progress is tracked very closely by the curriculum leader. This means any underachievement is picked up quickly. The leadership analyses this data and information from national tests results to check that all the different groups in the school are making the progress they should. This ensures that children who have English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their classmates. Higher attaining children are challenged by their work so that they achieve at a rapid rate. Children with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve as well as they can. The leadership is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards. In order to achieve this, the curriculum is innovative, with the children's different learning styles taken into account.

Mathematics across the curriculum

79. Mathematics is used effectively across the curriculum, especially in science and design and technology. This helps children to understand its practical application in other subjects and in day to day life.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievements are very good and considerably better than at the time of the last inspection.
- Very good attention is paid to the development of investigative skills and standards in this part of the subject are especially high.
- Too little use is made of children's developing skills in information and communication technology to extend learning in science.

Commentary

80. The school has made very good headway in science since its last inspection. At that time standards were found to be in line with national expectations at the ages both of 7 and eleven. From this sound base, standards have been driven up consistently, year by year and are now well above average at the end of both stages. Able children do well in science, as do those from ethnic minority groups and those for whom English is not their first language. Children with special educational needs receive the support they need to take a full part in lessons and they too achieve very well. The subject is enjoyed by girls and by boys who achieve equally well, although more use could be made of information and communication technology to extend their learning in the subject.

81. National tests and assessments confirm the extent of the school's achievements in this subject. They show that the standards of the 7 and eleven year olds are well above the national average and also well above schools in a similar context.

82. By the age of seven nearly all the children have a very good understanding of the place of electricity in today's world. They can list domestic appliances powered electrically and distinguish between mains and battery operation. Through making simple circuits, they have learned that it is important to fix batteries the right way up and that power will not flow through a clip fixed to the plastic

base of a bulb holder. Many are accurate in identifying faults in simple circuits that have not been constructed correctly. Children know the importance of safety in dealing with electricity. They observe the results of their experiments carefully and make good diagrams to show what they have done.

83. By the end of Year 6 early achievements have been consolidated and extended very well. The great majority of the children have gained a very good understanding of the variety of living things and of how plants, in particular, grow and thrive. They know how flowers attract pollinators, how the reproductive organs of plants function to allow pollination and how seed is dispersed to new locations. By dissecting lily buds, they have learned to identify and name the main structures and some more able children can distinguish male from female features. Their understanding is at a level well above that usually found in children of this age. Their work programme rightly focuses strong attention in teaching important scientific processes, such as making predictions, controlling experimental variables and accurately observing, measuring and interpreting results. Consequently they can set up reliable experiments, on seed germination for example, with little recourse to teacher guidance.

84. When the school was last inspected teaching standards overall were found to be good. Again there have been improvements and the quality of lessons seen in this inspection was very good. The work set is often challenging, even for more able children and calls for serious mental effort from them. Teachers have a very thorough knowledge of the skills and concepts being taught and this enables them to demonstrate, explain and question the children to very good effect. They appreciate the importance of teaching sound investigative skills and manage the practical side of the work very skilfully. In particular, they set tasks calling for independent and creative thinking by the children. In one good Year 6 lesson, for example, children were given some seeds, containers and different growing media. They were asked to find out what helps, or hinders, plant growth. Working in pairs, they needed to isolate one variable, for example, the amount of water, or effect of dark conditions to study, while holding all other factors constant. They also had to agree a method of measuring relative plant growth – should they use height, root spread or the number of leaves? One group decided to use “sturdiness” as their growth criterion, measuring the toughness of their plants by placing them on a windy window sill. However, when one child argued that the wind strength might vary on different parts of the window sill, another child proposed using a cold hairdryer to ensure constant conditions. The quality of thought and discussion was very high and children’s appreciation of experimental method was sharply accelerated.

85. Science is led and managed very well by the curriculum leader. A careful check is kept on children’s progress through the school and the quality of lessons taught. The curriculum leader ensures the provision of good equipment and produces a very good annual action plan for the future development of the subject. She also arranges additional enrichment opportunities, such as a Science Day and a science-based visit from a professional drama group.

86. Science is a buoyant and popular subject at the school and provision has improved very well since it was last inspected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of a much broader curriculum than at the last inspection.
- Good teaching and learning.
- Good subject leadership.
- Resources much improved since the last inspection and now excellent.
- Insufficient application of information and communication technology skills.

Commentary

87. The last inspection found that standards in information and communication technology at the end of the infants were in line with national expectations, but were below average at the end of the juniors. This was because new equipment was still being brought into use and some teachers lacked confidence in the subject. This is no longer the case. A much broader programme of study is now in place and children's knowledge and skills encompass a far wider range of applications than previously. Sound progress has been made in this subject since it was last inspected. Standards now are typical of those found nationally at the end of both stages. The range and quality of equipment has improved greatly and the school is now very well resourced. There is a well equipped computer room with good quality PCs networked with those in classrooms. Interactive whiteboards allow full classes to be taught more easily because teachers' demonstrations can be easily seen on the large screens.

88. By the time they leave the infants, most children are confident in their use of the computer keyboard and mouse. They can log on, find a named programme within a menu and use on-screen cues correctly. They know how to print and save their work. Most can use a simple word processor, including spacebar, shift key, delete and punctuation keys. Many can adjust the font size and colour of their text independently.

89. By the age of eleven, most children can navigate a word processing programme independently, modifying and editing text as they wish. They can create and import images and photographs into a text and vary page layout. They know how to complete a spreadsheet using the Excel programme and many can convert their data into a bar graph or pie chart. Most children know how to use email and to access information from CD-ROMs. They have some experience of using computers to control other devices, such as a simple floor robot. They can research simple factual information from the internet and the school ensure safe use of these systems.

90. In all lessons, children achieve well because good teaching ensures that they progress as fast as they can. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, also achieve well because there is adult help readily available to support them.

91. All the information and communication technology lessons seen were taught well. There is no longer a problem of lack of teacher confidence as reported at the previous inspection and the lessons observed were taught with energy and enthusiasm. This zest influenced the children, reinforcing their enjoyment of the subject and their preparedness to work hard to master its skills. Teachers demonstrate and explain very clearly. The questions they ask make the children think hard and they take good account of the range of ability in the class. In most lessons, they maximize the time children spend on the computers. In one good lesson, in Year 6, children learned to transfer data from a spreadsheet to a bar graph, using the Excel programme. The lesson began with a thorough check on what children had recently learned, on how to build a spreadsheet and how to interpret the data it contained. Making good use of the interactive whiteboard for demonstration, the teacher explained the next stage in the graph-making process. Working in pairs, children then had to produce their own spreadsheets and put the data into graph form. Less able children were well supported by a classroom assistant who could give a more detailed, step-by-step explanation of the processes. More able children, having built their bar graph, were then challenged to explore other types of graph and chart within the programme and explain the suitability of each to the data they were using. The lesson was challenging, had a very precise focus and made full use of what the children already knew.

92. However, a scrutiny of children's work from the last school year revealed very few instances of children using their information and communication technology skills to enrich or extend their learning in other subjects. The school is aware of this weakness and has an action plan to address it. In this aspect of the subject though, progress since the last inspection has been slow.

93. The subject programme is led and managed very well and more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. The school now employs a part-time technician and this has freed teachers

from the anxiety of complex machinery which does not always behave as it should. The programme of work is detailed and thorough and the subject leader checks children's progress regularly. Substantial staff training has been undertaken and has been important in raising confidence levels. The subject leader gives good advice and support to colleagues and keeps the school abreast of new developments. Forward planning for the future development of the subject is a particularly strong feature of the leadership provided. The school is now well placed to ensure that children benefit fully, across the whole curriculum, from the professional skills and high-quality resources available.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards achieved by pupils are above the national expectation.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Children's knowledge of environmental issues is good.
- There are too few opportunities for children to use information and communication technology in their work.

Commentary

95. The standard of children's work has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be in line with most schools nationally. At the end of both the infant and junior stages, children now achieve standards above the national expectation for their age. The programmes of work enable children to successfully develop a range of geographical skills as well as a knowledge and understanding of places. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school.

96. The overall quality of teaching is good. No teaching was observed in junior classes during the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence in children's exercise books and other sources to help make a judgement about the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning is thorough and contains clear learning objectives that are shared effectively with children at the beginning of lessons. There is a good mix of oral and practical activities that motivate the children to do their best.

97. Lessons build upon children's knowledge and personal experiences. In a Year 1 lesson, children could identify familiar places in the local environment, describe what they liked about each of them and explain their reasons. The responses they gave were mature and beyond the level expected nationally for children of a similar age. For example, one child expressed frustration that the London Underground had not been fully operational on a recent visit to central London.

98. Year 6 children are able to talk confidently about places in Europe and beyond. Many have personal experience of visiting places overseas and can use geographical vocabulary to describe them. They know the importance of water in terms of where people live and can describe the physical features of rivers and coasts.

99. Children's knowledge of environmental issues is good. In Year 2, children debated, in a mature way, the issue of finding a safe route to walk to school. They expressed frustration about the

high levels of traffic in the area that they live and the problems that are associated with it, such as fumes and the lack of parking facilities near their homes.

100. The quality of work in children's books is good. There is clear evidence of progress throughout the year. There are frequent opportunities for children to use geographical vocabulary and secondary sources of information, such as pictures, photographs, information text and videos. However, there are too few opportunities for children to use information and communication technology to help in geographical investigations. The marking of children's books is thorough and provides them with guidance on how to improve their work.

101. Visits to local places of interest and contrasting locations provide children with good opportunities to extend their learning. For example, a trip to Hastings enabled children to compare and contrast their local environment with a coastal resort.

102. Leadership of the subject is very good. Resources are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and the school's scheme of work for geography. The subject leader monitors standards in the subject through scrutiny of teachers' planning and sampling of children's work. There are plans to further develop formal assessment procedures in the near future.

History

Provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are above the national expectation for children of a similar age.
- Teaching is planned well and is effective.
- A wide range of learning opportunities, including visiting speakers and study trips, enhance children's learning.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Limited use is made of information and communication technology.

Commentary

103. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be typical of most schools. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the infant and junior stages. As a result, in Years 2 and 6 they are achieving standards higher than expected nationally.

104. The overall quality of teaching is good. No lessons were observed at the infant stage, but there was enough evidence in children's exercise books and other sources to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. The scheme of work provides a sound basis for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of historical events and periods. Children respond well to lessons because they are thoroughly planned and contain a wide variety of activities and experiences.

105. Children's attitudes are positive and behaviour in lessons is generally good. Their knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past, is good. They are able to talk with confidence about different historical periods that they have studied and know that information can be found from a range of sources, including the Internet.

106. The standard of work in children's books is good. They communicate their knowledge and understanding of the subject in a variety of ways, including drawing and writing, although opportunities for them to use information and communication technology are limited. The marking of children's work is very good because teachers provide comments that celebrate success and offer suggestions for improvement.

107. Opportunities for cross-curricular learning are optimised. In Year 5, teachers successfully linked historical learning with a study in art of William Morris. Children used information learned in their study of the Victorians to help them re-create the repeating patterns that Morris was famous for. The quality of work produced was of a high standard.

108. The subject leader provides very good leadership. Standards are monitored by regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and sampling of children's work. Resources are organised well and provide children with a range of artefacts from different historical periods. The subject leader is aware of the ongoing need to provide training for new staff in order to maintain the quality of teaching and learning that currently exists. She also has a clear view of what needs to be done to make further improvements in areas such as assessment.

109. High quality displays throughout the school give the subject a high profile. Photographs of the Victorian empathy day in Year 2 demonstrate how the subject was brought to life for children and the work in their books confirms this.

110. During the inspection, a visiting speaker provided Year 5 children with an opportunity to consider the life of a Victorian child. An extensive range of artefacts illustrated the teaching points in a lively and interesting way. The emptying of the chamber pot is something that they are unlikely to forget. Visits to places of historical interest further enhance children's learning.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a detailed scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.
- Well organised resources enhance children's learning of different faiths and religions.
- The subject leadership is very good.
- Links with community groups, including the local church, are strong.
- Assessment of children's progress against key learning objectives is very good.

Commentary

111. The subject has a high profile in the school and, as a result, children achieve good standards. The headteacher has assumed responsibility for its coordination. She has a thorough understanding of the work within the school and is proud of the developments during the last two years. During this time a detailed scheme of work, based upon the locally agreed syllabus, has been developed. It identifies key learning objectives for a range of themes and includes activities that assess children's knowledge and understanding against them. Assemblies have a weekly theme linked to the learning in religious education lessons.

112. The quality of teaching is generally good. There is clear evidence that in-service training has enabled teachers to develop their subject knowledge of different faiths and religions. Lessons are planned well and contain a range of activities. Children learn a lot about Christianity as well as other faiths. They have positive attitudes and behave well during lessons.

113. Work in exercise books is of a high standard. The books are well cared for by children, showing a pride in their work. Tasks set match the ability of children and, as a result, they make good progress, including brighter children and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language.

114. The headteacher provides very good leadership of this subject. She monitors standards within by scrutinising teachers' planning and sampling children's work. Assessments against the key objectives are used effectively to provide additional information about standards.

115. Resources have improved significantly since the last inspection. They are now well organised according to themes. Books, videos and artefacts appropriate to children's age and needs are plentiful. They are used well both within lessons and for displays to promote interest among children.

116. Strong links exist with the community and in particular the local church and synagogue. Children have benefited from visits to both of these places of worship and are able to identify similarities and differences between the two. Visiting speakers of different faiths also contribute to the wide range of children's experiences.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Programmes of work include varied and interesting activities that successfully reflect the different cultural experiences of the children.
- The standard of work overall is now good and some is very good.
- Good use is made of local artists to enrich and enliven the curriculum.
- Children's attitudes towards the subject are very good and they behave really well in lessons.
- Children show a willingness to experiment and make decisions for themselves.

Commentary

117. Only two lessons were seen during the period of the inspection, one each in Years 5 and 6. It is not possible, therefore, to give an overall judgement about teaching at the infant stage. Other evidence was informed by an examination of teachers' records and planning as well as scrutiny of children's past work, including displays around the school. This shows that standards at the end of both the infant and junior stages have improved since the last inspection and are now better than that expected nationally. In addition, there are some examples of high quality work. The school has worked hard recently to improve the range of activities in lessons. Children engage in varied and interesting tasks that include painting, observational drawing, collage, clay work, printing and the making of mosaics. Knowledge, skills and understanding are built up in a systematic way and, as a result, their achievement over time is good, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Programmes of work are linked to national guidance. They also successfully reflect the cultural experiences of the children, for example when designing and painting African masks. Good use is made of local artists to enrich the curriculum, as when the older children took part last year in a ceramics workshop. Encouraged by the artists, they designed and made high quality fish, leaves and flowers.

118. Children show good skills in drawing, painting and colouring and use these effectively to illustrate work in subjects such as science, history and religious education. For example, junior children have made good sketches of a Hindu Temple. As they move up through the school, their creative development is good. They are given opportunities to use a wide range of media and show a willingness to experiment and make decisions for themselves. This benefits their personal development. Records of children's work show they have a growing awareness of pattern, texture, shape and size. Their observational skills are good and show an increasing understanding of proportion, as in self-portraits and pastel drawings of bottles by some of the younger infant children. Appropriate attention is given to the work of well-known artists and this helps children to begin to appreciate the wide variety of ways that feelings and experiences can be represented in pictures.

119. In the lessons seen, teaching was good in one and very good in the other. Quiet, purposeful learning environments were created so children could concentrate and give of their best. As a result,

their attitudes towards the subject were very good and they behaved really well. Activities were prepared and explained clearly and this helped to ensure that time was used productively. Particular skills and techniques were demonstrated effectively so children could try them out themselves, which many did successfully. Good opportunities were provided for them to work together and this helped their social development. In the very good, lesson a strong emphasis was placed on encouraging children to evaluate their efforts and make amendments so as to bring about improvements.

120. The subject leader is in her second year of teaching and has only just taken on the responsibility of leading the subject. She is keen and, given time, has the ability to develop her role and lead effectively. She has already looked at last year's planning and scrutinised samples of children's work. Resources for the subject are good, but rather untidily stored.

121. Displays of work around the school are often of a very high standard. They celebrate children's achievements and help to develop their visual awareness.

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of work is now good and some is very good.
- Programmes of work are varied and interesting. They challenge children to think hard and to use their imagination.
- Children are encouraged to evaluate their work and to consider how their products might be improved.
- The subject leader leads the subject very well.

Commentary

122. Only one lesson was seen during the period of the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching. Other evidence was collected from an examination of teachers' records and planning as well as the scrutiny of children's past work, including that on display. This shows that standards at the end of both the infant and junior stages have risen since the last inspection and are now above that typical for their age with some examples of very good work. The programme of activities is linked to national guidelines and often lively and interesting. Particular attention has been given recently to children's finished products. Teachers ensure that, as children move up through the school, their knowledge, skills and understanding are built up in a systematic way. As a result, their achievement over time is good, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The children often work in groups and this benefits their personal development.

123. Children are given a good range of opportunities to generate ideas and to plan the design and making of products. The results are often pleasing, for example when constructing winding mechanisms and model trucks. They think carefully about the order of their work and show increasing confidence in handling equipment and selecting different materials, making sensible choices when doing so. Their manipulative and control skills are good, as when using scissors and glue to cut and join materials. Teachers ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging and give children a chance to use their imagination. An example of this was when older infants were set the problem of designing and making a model vehicle to carry eight marbles one metre. They responded with enthusiasm and the outcomes were very good. The importance of refining what is made in order to bring about improvement is rightly emphasised and children write well thought out evaluations of their completed products.

124. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. It was thoroughly prepared and one in a series of lessons in which Year 3 children were working in groups to design and make moving monsters. The children behaved well and demonstrated very good attitudes towards the task. Their initial designs showed imagination and flair. They made lists of the materials needed and considered how parts would be joined, which would move and how. Slower learners were provided with lists of materials together with suggestions to help them make choices. Brighter children moved more quickly to the making process and showed good skills in measuring, cutting and sticking. The lesson was structured well with a good mix of discussion and practical work. The teacher continually assessed what children were doing and challenged them to think hard through well directed questions. As a result, they enjoyed themselves and made good progress in their understanding of how best to design and construct their models.

125. The subject leader has held the responsibility for two years. She is enthusiastic about her role and provides very good leadership. The general profile of the subject has been raised successfully with an emphasis on the development of children's skills and some in-service training for teachers. The subject leader scrutinises children's work and uses digital photographs to help keep a record of what has been achieved in each class. She sees teachers' planning and observes lessons giving verbal and written feedback to help raise standards. Resources are good and stored in cupboards for safety.

126. Teachers display children's work in classrooms and shared areas around the school. This celebrates their achievements and encourages their creative development.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of opportunity for children to make and enjoy music is excellent.
- The standard of music teaching is very good.
- Music permeates school life.
- Parents are highly appreciative of what is offered.

Commentary

127. Standards have risen sharply since the previous inspection. At that time standards were found to be typical of children of seven and eleven. Now standards are well above what is usually found. Both the gifted and the less talented achieve very well because the programme is so varied and enjoyable.

Example of outstanding practice

Music provision that also adds much to children's social and cultural development

Parents and children coming to school early find recorded music already playing in the classrooms. From the start of the day to the end, music permeates school life. Few of the class teachers claim any specialist skills in music, yet all teach the subject to their own classes with confidence and skill, supported by an excellent scheme of work. Children in the reception year and in Years 1, 2 and 3 also gain huge benefit from a visiting specialist singing teacher who works with each class. Lunchtimes bring a rush of musical activity. The band, with string, woodwind and brass sections rehearses for its next performance. A full drum kit has been bought and the percussion section is being built up. Children can have group instrumental lessons in piano, guitar, trumpet, flute, clarinet and saxophone. A parent has just started a practical after-school music-making club for children under seven. The school choir practices weekly and performs regularly for assemblies and other performances. Among the most popular events are musical evenings, when parents are invited to play alongside their children. Professional instrumental groups visit regularly to play to the children and an opera company works with older children towards a production. The school arranges visits to the ballet and to London concerts whenever possible. Musical enthusiasm is contagious. Few of the children remain uninfected!

128. By the time children reach the age of seven, they have a very well developed sense of rhythm and can describe the variety of sounds their percussion instruments make. They select instruments to match the tone or feeling of a story. They sing tunefully, with correct posture and good breath control. Singing is enthusiastic, but children also listen well to those around them in order create a balanced sound.

129. By the age of eleven most children can read music well. They can create and notate their own simple compositions, using forms of notation they invent for themselves, with full attention to rhythm, pattern and repetition. They recognise a wide range of musical forms and can discuss these intelligently. For example, Year 5 children can explain how, in vocal music, a round differs from a hymn or an opera chorus. On hearing a recording of "Eternal Father strong to save", children identified it as a hymn from a church setting and with a particular instrumental accompaniment. They quickly learned the hymn and sang it well, before moving on to hear a section of Britten's "Noyes Fludde" where the same tune is reworked against a storm background. The ensuing discussion, drawing out the differences and similarities of the two pieces, was very demanding and children demonstrated understanding well above that typical of their age.

130. The music lessons seen in the inspection were of very good quality. Teachers made good use of instruments and recorded excerpts and challenged the children with searching questions and very effective direct coaching, in singing for example. Children enjoyed the tasks they were given and were prepared to work hard to be successful. Lessons were well organised and covered a lot of ground in a short time.

131. The music programme is very well led by the assistant head, herself a non-specialist. She brings great enthusiasm to the work, ensuring good equipment is available, maintaining an oversight of the quality of instrumental tuition as well as class teaching and ensuring that the exceptionally rich curriculum in this subject is kept up.

Physical Education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has a high profile throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is a good range of sport based after school activities.
- Community links are strong.

- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

132. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The subject has a high profile throughout the school and there is improved coverage of all areas of activity. The range of opportunities for children to participate in physical activity is extensive. As a result, they achieve standards that are good in relation to the national expectations. All children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the infant and junior stages.

133. The quality of teaching is good. Both indoor and outdoor activities were observed. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence has improved as a result of recent in-service training. They plan a range of activities that fully meet the National Curriculum requirements and enable children to develop their physical skills well.

134. Children's attitudes towards the subject are positive and their behaviour is very good. They listen carefully to instructions and respond to teachers' suggestions on how to improve their work. During lessons, they work well with partners and in collaborative groups.

135. In Year 2, children were observed organising themselves into threes and practising their throwing and catching skills in a game of piggy in the middle. They took turns and recognised the need to play fairly. Year 6, children performed a dance sequence in groups of three, showing awareness of each others' movements. Their peers acted as critical friends, saying what they were impressed by and offering suggestions for improvements.

136. Facilities for the subject are good overall. Despite the fact that the school does not have a playing field it makes very good use of its three halls and two outdoor areas. New apparatus in the playground provides children with daily opportunities to be physically active. Additional resources, stored outside, are organised well and easily accessible.

137. The subject leader provides very good leadership. She advises teachers about lesson content, monitors their planning and identifies training needs. The quality of provision is greatly enhanced by strong links with professional sports teams.

138. A wide range of after-school activities and special events, such as the skipping workshop and the Super Schools programme all contribute to the improved standards at the school. The impact of the 'Skipathon' was clearly evident in a Year 2 lesson in which almost all children could skip with confidence.

139. The school recently received the Healthy Schools Award. Children are encouraged to walk to school and the majority do so. Teachers promote healthy minds and bodies by drawing children's attention to their physical needs. They encourage children to drink water throughout the day and to eat fresh fruit at snack time in an attempt to keep them healthy and fit.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

140. The programme for personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drug misuse, is a very good one. In the Foundation Stage, personal, social and emotional development receives a lot of attention. The high quality skills established when children enter the school are maintained throughout their time in school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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