

INSPECTION REPORT

FOUR SWANNES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Waltham Cross

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117092

Acting Headteacher: Mr Robert Blythe

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 15-17 March 2004

Inspection number: 263854

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:	2-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	King Edward Road Waltham Cross Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN8 7HH
Telephone number:	01992 763939
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Tyler
Date of previous inspection:	29/06/98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community primary school serves a wide area around the school and pupils come from a broad mixture of socio-economic backgrounds. Socio-economic indicators show that a larger than average proportion of pupils come from relatively deprived home backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely but overall is well below average and in recent years there has been a marked decline in children's early communication and language skills. At the time of the last inspection attainment on entry was below average but the area has changed gradually over the past few years. Most pupils are from white English speaking families although around a quarter are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is a large proportion, 16 per cent, whose home language is not English and around a half of these are at an early stage of learning to speak English. There is quite a large Turkish community in the area. Several pupils come from the families of asylum seekers. A quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils entered on the school's record of special educational needs, 25 per cent, is above average and of these a small number has a statement of special educational needs because they need considerable help with their learning. Overall the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part way through this stage of their education, around 12 per cent, is broadly average but in several year groups the proportion is higher. It has become very difficult to recruit teachers in this area. There is a part-time nursery class that provides for 29 children each morning and a pre-school playgroup of eight children who attend for two afternoons a week. The school won a School Achievement Award in 2002 and gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology.
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector	
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, geography, music.
7465	Richard Brent	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, special educational needs, history, physical education, religious education.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school provides a sound education for its pupils and satisfactory value for money.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are good in the Foundation Stage. In recent years staff absence and difficulties in recruiting teachers have seriously affected the continuity of pupils' learning and have had an adverse effect on their achievement. However, achievement is now satisfactory overall and pupils achieve particularly well in Years 5 and 6, so that by the end of Year 6 they are likely to attain broadly average standards. The acting headteacher is supported well by staff and governors and together they provide sound leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well, enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Although pupils' achievement is inconsistent, by the time pupils leave the school they have achieved well in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good, they have positive attitudes to learning and form very good relationships with others. However, attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Subject leaders are keen to raise standards but the steps needed to improve teaching and learning are currently unclear.
- There are many examples of good and very good teaching but it is unsatisfactory in a significant proportion of lessons, particularly in science where standards should be higher.
- Not enough time is spent on teaching some subjects and there are currently insufficient activities beyond the school day.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained at average levels in most subjects except science, where standards are lower, and English and ICT, where standards are now higher than they were. However, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is lower now than it was. There are also higher levels of staff turnover, it is now more difficult to recruit teachers and the quality of teaching is not quite as good as at the time of the last inspection. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues raised in the last inspection report; standards in English have improved as has development planning, although there are still issues regarding the need for school plans to focus clearly on how standards will be raised.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	D	A
Mathematics	E	E*	E*	E
Science	E	E	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

*The * symbol indicates that the school ranks among the lowest 5 per cent nationally.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start in the nursery with well below average skills and because of good teaching in the Foundation Stage, and very good teaching in the nursery, children achieve well although they are unlikely to attain all the goals expected by the end of reception. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory but varies from year to year according to the characteristics of the groups of pupils in each class and the degree of success that the school has in recruiting teachers. Achievement is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 because the teaching in

these year groups has been more consistent. The school has made a concerted effort to improve standards in English and, more recently, in mathematics. This is beginning to be reflected in an improving trend in national test results and standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are now broadly average. Resources for ICT are good and standards are above average. Standards in religious education are broadly average. Standards in science are below average and this represents a significant weakness as pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, many pupils have poorly developed language skills that have an impact on many subjects so by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are below average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They have good attitudes to their work are eager to please. Pupils develop good levels of self-esteem and social conduct. There are high levels of racial harmony and pupils work and play happily together. Pupils are confident and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory because a small minority of parents do not insist that their children attend regularly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is sound. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. More than half of the teaching is good and in the nursery it is very good. There are also examples of unsatisfactory teaching in a number of lessons in Years 2 to 6, particularly in science when pupils do not always learn enough, and in mathematics where teaching does not always match the learning needs of all groups. Teachers maintain high expectations of behaviour and pupils' very good behaviour and their good attitudes to learning boost their achievement. The teaching for pupils who speak languages other than English is good in the Foundation Stage and when they are supported by specialist staff. The school has accurately identified the areas of the curriculum where improvements are required. Resources are directed towards these areas, but there are too few visits to enliven the curriculum and it is not well balanced; whilst the time devoted to English is high, some subjects such as science, are not taught enough.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is emerging from a difficult period caused by problems in recruiting a headteacher after the retirement of the last incumbent. The governing body provides sound support and has helped to maintain continuity during this transitional stage in the school's history, and ensures that the school complies with all legal requirements. The governing body appointed an experienced acting headteacher, and a new headteacher to take over in April 2004. Most of the subject leaders are new to their areas of responsibility. They have action plans that underpin the school improvement plan but the plans describe issues regarding resources rather than the steps to be taken to improve teaching and learning and to raise standards. The Goldsmiths' Company supports the school well by providing extra funds to improve literacy and, more recently, numeracy.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children but are concerned by the large number of temporary teachers who only stay for short periods. Inspection findings confirm that this leads to a lack of consistency in pupils' learning. They feel well informed about school issues but are rarely consulted about changes. Pupils like their school and there is little that they wish to be changed. They are proud to be members of the school community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in science.
- Improve teaching, particularly in mathematics, and develop subject leaders' action plans so that they define how teaching and learning will be improved in order to raise standards.
- Review timetables so that time is used more efficiently for all subjects.
- Improve attendance by closer monitoring and follow-up of absence.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils enter the nursery with standards of attainment that are well below average. They do well in the Foundation Stage, but by the end of reception standards are still below average. Achievement overall from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory but it is inconsistent; in some year groups it is good and in others patchy. Most pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are broadly average overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards overall are below average by the end of Year 2, most pupils have good attitudes to reading and a good command of basic early reading skills.
- Standards in English and ICT have improved since the last inspection because of the school's good attention to these subjects.
- Standards in science are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

1. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good so children make good progress in their learning and achieve well. By the end of the reception year the standards that most children attain are below average in each of the six areas of learning, and especially in communication, language and literacy.
2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but, due to their low starting point, the standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2 are likely to remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics and science. National test results for pupils in Year 2 show a substantial improvement in reading, but results in writing, mathematics and science are much the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils that attained the national target of Level 2 in reading has been slightly above the national average in the last two years, although the proportion that attained the higher Level 3 standard was well below national averages. The school's good systems for analysing and setting targets for improvement indicate that there is likely to be a continued advance in reading standards and a slight advance in writing and mathematics in 2004. Inspection findings confirm this analysis. Last year there was a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language in the year group that took the tests and several were still not fully secure in speaking English. This limited the school's overall performance in national tests.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.6 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.0 (14.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils' achievement continues to be satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 but it is patchy. It is much better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. There are several reasons for this unevenness. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English tend to have caught up in their understanding of English and are increasingly competent by Year 5. Also the teaching in Years 5 and 6 is more consistent. Staffing problems have affected pupils in Year 4 more than any other year group. This has caused inconsistencies in pupils' progress and gaps in their learning. However, pupils'

achievement is good in Years 5 and 6 and most are likely to attain average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. These findings are not reflected in the national test results in 2003 which were below national averages in English and so far below in mathematics and science that they were among the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The trend in the school's performance over the past five years has been below the improving trend nationally. However, inspection findings confirm the school's assessments that this year's group of Year 6 pupils will do much better than last year's class. There are many reasons for this. There was a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in last year's Year 6 class. There was also a high proportion of pupils who were newcomers to the school, including several refugees with limited English. These factors had an adverse effect on the school's performance in the national tests in 2003. However, because the school has placed a strong emphasis on developing reading and writing skills, pupils in Year 6 did well in the national tests in English when compared with the performance of similar schools, and attained standards that were well above average. Pupils' achievement overall is constrained by the element of unsatisfactory teaching that occurs. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching result in inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' learning. However, this is somewhat counterbalanced by pupils' positive attitudes and their enthusiasm for learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (24.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.3 (22.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.1 (25.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support and are helped to make sound progress and achieve as well as all the other pupils.
5. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English and are at a very early stage of learning to speak English do not achieve as well as the other pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science until their vocabulary develops sufficiently for them to understand explanations fully. They are supported well and begin to catch up with the others but their command of technical vocabulary is often limited and this impedes their progress, particularly in science and mathematics.
6. Pupils demonstrate exceptional confidence in their use of computers. The oldest pupils use them well for researching on the Internet and for improving their skills in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in ICT that are above average because key skills are taught well by several enthusiastic teachers, resources are good and pupils are particularly keen on this subject.
7. The school has concentrated hard on improving standards in English and mathematics and in recognition of its success in supporting pupils' development of basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy, it was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark last year. The Goldsmiths' Company has supported the school by providing extra resources to enhance pupils' learning opportunities in literacy and more recently in numeracy. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement in these areas of the curriculum. The school has not maintained such a strong focus on science and this subject has been neglected. Consequently the standards that pupils attain are not as high as they should be. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good and they attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave very well, have good attitudes to learning and show genuine respect for the school code. The moral and cultural development of pupils is good, social development is very good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Very good relationships are evident throughout the school and reflect pupils' very good social development.
- Pupils' positive attitudes in lessons contribute strongly to their learning but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility.
- The school does not do enough to monitor and improve levels of attendance.

Commentary

8. From their earliest days in school children settle well and enjoy playing and working with their friends. However many have poorly developed social skills on entry and most are unlikely to attain all the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of reception. Pupils like school and want to work hard and do the best they can. Parents appreciate the fact that their children like school and are expected to work sensibly. Pupils work well on their own and in small groups with equal confidence. They pay close attention to the work in hand and show great enthusiasm for their studies. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils concentrated hard on drawing very detailed pictures of flowers. Everyone was fully involved with their drawing and the very good learning atmosphere was enhanced by background music. Despite positive attitudes and a willingness to help, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to undertake school responsibilities and even older pupils have limited chances to help in school. They show visitors around the school and help to manage the computer suite by switching on and shutting down the computers. Two pupils help with the preparation of assemblies and pupils do express preferences for the charities but there are no other significant ways in which they can contribute to the day-to-day running of the school.
9. Pupils are helped to develop a clear understanding of their own worth and to understand and value people around them. They know how they should behave and show high levels of respect for others, their views and their beliefs. The school focuses well on the faiths and cultures of different groups and this is very evident in the good displays around the school. Pupils enjoy the racial mix within the school and all treat each other with respect. Pupils are aware of the need to protect the environment and have a developing understanding of environmental issues. A number of classrooms had Easter displays and fresh arrangements of daffodils for the pupils to enjoy. Pupils value their school and are pleased to be part of a happy and well-ordered community. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models and this helps pupils to behave courteously and to act appropriately in different social situations. The work pupils have produced as a result of their studies of the cultures of other countries is prominently displayed around the school. Assemblies are well planned and provide a calm start to the school day. The school is good at providing an environment where pupils are nurtured and are helped to feel confident in their abilities.
10. Pupils understand and respect the school behaviour code and meet the high expectations for good behaviour very well, which contributes significantly to the relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the school. Playtimes and lunch times are happy and tranquil occasions when pupils mix well and enjoy each other's company. There are a few pupils whose behaviour can be challenging but they are well managed by teachers and do not interrupt the learning of their classmates. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are rare and any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and this is in some measure due to the very good quality of relationships in the school.

11. Levels of attendance are below the national average and there is more unauthorised absence than found nationally. Each year a significant number of pupils miss some days at school for family reasons, including holidays, which can sometimes last for several weeks especially if children are going abroad to meet their extended family. There are also a few families who show a continual disregard for the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school. The school does not follow up absences sufficiently promptly and patterns of absence are also not monitored on a strict and regular basis. Consequently parents are not kept constantly aware of the importance of their children attending school regularly and not missing lessons. The school has not had to resort to excluding pupils for unacceptable behaviour in the last school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.6
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is sound. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, the curriculum is satisfactory and taught according to legal requirements although insufficient time is allocated to some subjects. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory and this promotes generally sound learning. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching and learning. In over a half of the lessons seen teaching was good and often very good but in a significant proportion of lessons, mainly in science, teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils did not learn enough. Teaching in the nursery is very good. Assessments of learning are satisfactory but the information about the progress of individuals is not always used to match tasks to pupils' widely varying stages of development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy a good start to their schooling because the teaching in the nursery is very good.
- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught thoroughly in Years 1 and 2.
- Tasks presented to pupils are not always matched well to their learning needs.
- The good teaching in Years 5 and 6 boosts pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in a significant proportion of lessons, mainly in science, and this constrains pupils' achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (20%)	17 (39%)	14 (32%)	4 (9%)	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.

12. The learning environment in the nursery has been organised well and this promotes very effective learning. The nursery teacher and the support staff work well together and from the moment children enter the classroom to the moment they leave, learning is highly productive. The children whose mother tongue is not English are well supported by a specialist teacher and a specialist teaching assistant who visit the school each week. Lesson planning is precise and the outdoor learning environment is used extremely well to complement what is going on in the classroom. Exciting themes are introduced, based on the duties of firemen or policemen for example. Resources are of good quality and are used well.
13. Although teaching for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory, some staff have difficulty in tailoring the work and learning materials to the needs of these pupils in subjects such as science and mathematics. This impedes their achievement.
14. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is generally satisfactory and it is good when the visiting specialists work with individuals and groups of pupils. They quickly learn basic English speaking skills and the support provided helps them to make satisfactory gains in their learning.
15. Reading, writing and basic numeracy skills are for the most part taught soundly. Reading is taught systematically. A good programme has been introduced that is designed to teach pupils about the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent. This system helps to ensure that phonic skills are taught methodically. Also pupils follow a programme that helps them to build a repertoire of words recognised on sight. These strategies support the development of reading and writing well. Numeracy skills are generally taught thoroughly but the teaching in one numeracy lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher kept the children sitting all together for far too long. Here opportunities were missed to organise time so that they spent more of it engaged in practical activities that provided appropriate challenges for the different groups. The higher attaining pupils had already mastered the skills being taught and learned little that was new during the lesson. Also the work in pupils' books shows that the lower attaining pupils are sometimes given tasks that are too hard and they fail to achieve success. Tasks are not planned with enough regard to the stages of development that they have reached. This is because teachers do not modify plans to meet the needs of all and because they move on through the planned units of work before all pupils have gained full mastery of skills.
16. The good teaching in Years 5 and 6 helps pupils to gain confidence in their learning. Skills in English and mathematics are taught effectively. Pupils' achievement accelerates in these year groups. The interactive, computerised whiteboard is used well to support teaching and learning. Teachers plan work thoroughly and all groups are supported well. The teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. Pupils respond well and develop good levels of maturity and a sensible approach to learning. They work well collaboratively and support each other well. They are particularly confident in using computers to support and enhance their learning.
17. Teaching was unsatisfactory in four lessons. In these lessons pupils did not learn enough and it is clear that the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching resulted in inconsistencies in pupils' achievement, particularly in science. Unsatisfactory teaching is caused partly by imprecise planning and by presenting tasks that are not sufficiently adapted to enable all groups in the class to learn successfully. In particular work for the slower learners is sometimes too hard. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory. This is because activities to promote investigative science are not organised successfully to enable pupils to decide on appropriate approaches or to think creatively. Lessons are sometimes dominated by the teacher's agenda rather than by organising lessons so that pupils are enabled to find out for themselves.

The curriculum

There is a satisfactory curriculum in the school, and it is good in the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is enriched by a good range of educational visits and by visitors to the school but there are too few visits for other year groups. There are very few sporting fixtures against other schools. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and sufficient to support teaching and learning. Resources and staffing in the Foundation Stage are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is relevant and places a strong emphasis on developing English and skills in ICT which match pupils' most important learning needs.
- Time is not always used as productively as it could be and this reduces opportunities for learning.
- The curriculum is well structured but plans are not always adapted to meet the needs of all groups.
- The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with English as an additional language.
- A very good range of stimulating activities results in a rich curriculum for children in the nursery.
- There are too few educational visits and no sports teams or interschool sports matches.

Commentary

18. The school has a longer school day than most and spends thirty per cent of its teaching time on English, which has had a significant impact on raising standards to their present levels. The management of the school has identified the need to improve literacy skills as a matter of the highest priority. There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils to read. Pupils learn to read effectively and this helps them to gain access to other areas of the curriculum. There is also a strong emphasis on ICT and pupils learn how to use the Internet for research and to extend their learning in other subjects. They use computers well to support their learning across the curriculum.
19. As a result of the strong emphasis on English and the substantial amount of time devoted to teaching literacy, other subjects have less teaching time allocated. For example, science has a third less time than most schools nationally and this has contributed to a decline in standards. Timetables are not constructed well enough. Some afternoon lessons extend to an hour and three quarters without a break. Pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration over such long periods. Extra activities, such as rehearsing for Christmas productions, are not built into the overall timetable, and so parts of the curriculum that teachers planned to teach during these times are missed altogether or taught hurriedly.
20. A complex framework of long, medium and short term plans promotes the systematic teaching of the curriculum. These plans are based on nationally recommended planning frameworks. The plans provide very good guidance for teachers and help to ensure that the National Curriculum is fully covered and that skills, knowledge and understanding are taught in a methodical sequence. However, the plans are not always adjusted sufficiently to take into account the widely varying learning needs of all groups of pupils in each class. This has an impact on the opportunities that different groups have to learn effectively. This is particularly noticeable in science. Furthermore, teachers sometimes feel impelled to move from one week's plan to the next even though some groups are not secure in their mastery of the week's work. This was particularly noticeable in mathematics.
21. Provision for pupils whose mother tongue is not English is good. When these pupils join the school, staff assess their language and wider learning needs accurately. The required support is then organised well. Good teaching by the visiting specialists helps pupils to make good progress in learning the more structured English needed in lessons compared with the everyday language needed for social interaction. They are supported well so that their achievement matches that of the other pupils. Even so, some pupils lack full understanding of

specialised terms, particularly in science and mathematics. This hinders them from demonstrating their underlying understanding in those subjects. The specialist teacher and teaching assistant offer good support within classes and planning is detailed and precise. The curriculum is adapted effectively for the large group of pupils who speak Turkish as their first language. Parents are full of praise for the provision the school makes. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their individual education plans have clear targets that all understand.

22. Accommodation is good in the nursery, which is spacious and has an outside area with a wide range of good quality equipment so that an outdoor curriculum can be fully planned. A very good range of interesting activities are organised around different themes. During the inspection fire fighting and the work of firemen formed the basis for many exciting activities. These included a visit from a fire engine and discussions with the crew. Children in the reception class also use the outside area several times a week, but lack of direct access restricts outdoor learning opportunities for the older children.
23. There are very few visits made to places of interest and so opportunities to enrich the curriculum and make learning more exciting are missed. Parents regret that there are so few educational visits. Lack of opportunity to participate in extra-curricular sport also concerns parents. There are no school teams and apart from netball for older pupils, no sports clubs or opportunities to play sports against other schools, apart from the annual district sports day. The school has arranged clubs in the past but the response was disappointing. Provision for extra-curricular activities is currently unsatisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and good attention is given to their welfare, health and safety. Pupils are provided with sound support and guidance. Insufficient opportunities exist to canvass pupils' views and involve them fully in the development of their school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are effective.
- The welfare of pupils is given a high priority and the good care and support helps pupils to feel comfortable and confident.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very well organised.
- Staff listen to pupils sensitively.
- Pupils' views are not regularly canvassed and they do not contribute sufficiently to their school community.

Commentary

24. All staff assign a high priority to the safety and care of pupils. Child protection matters are well managed and there are clear and sensible procedures for medicines in school and the care of pupils who are unwell. The clear policies relating to health and safety are implemented well and regular inspections of the school premises and equipment are carried out so the school provides a safe environment for pupils. One of the areas that the school has focused on recently has been improving the outdoor play area for pupils, and the games areas marked out on the playground are now very popular and well used. The well organised breakfast club is well attended each morning and is an example of the extra facilities that the school is prepared to offer in order to maintain high standards of care. Another example is the provision for Turkish parents to communicate, in person or by telephone, with the school via a Turkish speaking assistant on Friday mornings. This regular slot is used well and provides good support for parents and their children.
25. There are careful and well organised arrangements for new children entering the school. The nursery staff visit children, their parents and carers during home visits prior to children starting

school. These visits help to create very good relationships between staff and parents. They also provide excellent opportunities for staff to discuss children's individual stages of development and any particular learning needs. The visits ensure a calm and happy introduction to school life for new parents as well as the children. The afternoon pre-school facility is well integrated with the nursery so the youngest children feel confident and relaxed about their first days in school.

26. Staff know the pupils in their care well. Personal development is sensibly monitored by teachers and the information is used effectively to promote their development and progress as they move through the school. Although the pre-inspection pupil questionnaires suggested that some pupils did not feel that they had someone in school in whom they could confide, the inspection found this to be inaccurate. All staff happily spend time with pupils, listen to their problems and help and encourage them. The support and expertise of a number of support services and agencies are well used by the school to supplement the care and guidance given by staff and further support the needs of pupils. The Education Welfare Officer, Education Psychologist and other agencies all play an important part in the good level of care provided for pupils.
27. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are prepared appropriately and include precise learning targets for pupils to aim at. There is a much greater emphasis on literacy targets than targets in other areas of the curriculum. This narrows the effectiveness of provision.
28. Pupils are not consulted regularly, either informally or formally, to gain their views about the school or ideas for how things can change and develop. Recently pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been consulted on the new playground games but this is a new procedure and younger pupils were not included in the discussions. Important opportunities are missed to help promote the development and maturity of pupils by involving them fully in their school community and showing them that their ideas and opinions are valued and welcomed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained sound links with parents and works consistently to improve these links and keep parents well informed. Links with other schools are satisfactory and there are good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children.
- A small minority of parents do not co-operate by ensuring that their children attend regularly.
- The regular information provided for parents about the curriculum is good but parents do not always respond to school initiatives.
- Parents are not consulted by the school on a regular basis.
- Good community links have been established and maintained.

Commentary

29. Parents are pleased with most aspects of the school. They value the school's emphasis on encouraging their children to work hard. They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have problems or concerns. Parents feel that a good range of activities are available for their children and they are helped to support their children's learning at home. Some parents did not feel they were kept well informed about the progress of their child or that their views and suggestions were sought. Inspection findings did not fully support these concerns. The school has greatly improved the quality and range of information provided for parents. Parents are invited to a range of events and activities, often linked to new initiatives and subjects of the curriculum, but the majority of parents do not show much interest in these events. Attempts to

understand and collect the views of parents have met with a similar lack of response from parents and this has inhibited the school from regularly canvassing their views.

30. A small minority of parents do not co-operate by sending their children to school regularly. Others take their children on extended family holidays during term time. The governors' annual report to parents includes statistics on attendance but does not emphasise the impact of poor attendance on pupils' learning. The school does not make parents sufficiently aware of the importance of their children attending school regularly and not missing lessons.
31. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are helpful documents that give a clear picture of the school. Reports have recently been redesigned and are well set out, informative and give parents a very secure picture of how their child has worked and achieved during the year as well as highlighting some areas in which they can improve their work in English, maths and science. Although reports meet legal requirements, reporting on creative arts and humanities subjects is less informative and often confined to descriptions of the work that has been covered in class without indicating the achievements made by their child. Regular newsletters and events for parents to explain areas of the curriculum provide additional important information so that parents are kept fully informed about what is happening in school and in individual classes. Any complaints from parents are dealt with promptly and effectively. A few parents help in school on a regular basis, however the majority show a passive resistance to close links with the school but continuous efforts are made to try to involve parents more fully in the day to day life of the school. The Parents Association provides good support for the school and runs regular social and fundraising events. The funds raised are used effectively to enhance the school and provide valuable equipment and furniture, such as that recently provided in the nursery.
32. The school has a good range of well developed community links including support from local shops, churches and recreational facilities. There is a close link with the Baptist Church and the school and church share accommodation very efficiently to their mutual advantage. Pupils are introduced to their local area well and have regular trips to explore their neighbourhood including trips into the town centre and local parks. There is a well established link with the Goldsmiths' Company in London that has made available very generous financial support for the school to support curriculum initiatives. This connection has recently been extended in a very enterprising way so that the school is working with another primary school in Borehamwood to link the pupils in a 'buddy scheme'. This is designed to extend the interests of the pupils and promote their personal development. Visitors to the school also extend the learning opportunities of pupils. A local football club provides coaches to run training sessions that are very popular with pupils. The school provides work experience placements for secondary pupils on a regular basis and this is helpful to secondary pupils but also gives younger pupils a chance to meet and mix with older pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is satisfactory. The acting headteacher is experienced and, with the good support of the deputy headteacher, provides sound leadership. The management of the school is generally satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the management of the curriculum by key staff and in ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching. The work of the governing body is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staffing problems present major barriers to raising standards.
- The school reacts strongly to remedy its most important weaknesses.
- Staff and governors work together well as a team determined to do their best for all pupils.
- Teachers with specific responsibility for improving provision in different areas of the curriculum are not yet effective enough in raising standards in their subjects.
- Time is not always managed efficiently.

- The deputy headteacher provides good leadership in making sure that resources are directed towards those groups of pupils who require extra help in their learning.
- Finances are managed carefully.

Commentary

33. The school has found it difficult to recruit a new headteacher since the retirement of the previous incumbent. As a temporary measure the governors have appointed an experienced acting headteacher to lead and manage the school. This has proved to be a successful initiative and the acting headteacher provides sound leadership and has maintained satisfactory day-to-day management of the school. The school faces challenging circumstances that have hampered efforts to raise standards. It has become increasingly difficult to recruit staff in the outer London fringe area where house prices are high. The school had to rely on temporary appointments and on appointing teachers to posts where they had limited prior experience. The school has employed agencies to find appropriately qualified teachers and this has proved successful, albeit expensive. Teachers from overseas bring a useful range of experiences to the school but few are fully conversant with the National Curriculum, the National Literacy Strategy or the National Numeracy Strategy. Training is provided but inevitably it takes time for these teachers to develop all the necessary expertise to teach effectively.
34. The school is also striving to raise standards against a background of steadily falling attainment on entry, and particularly an increase in the proportion of pupils with lower than average communication and language development. The governing body is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well as it tackles areas that are identified for improvement. The deputy headteacher conducts thorough analyses of pupils' performance and the results are used well to identify groups that are not making the progress expected. These groups are then the subject of extra attention designed to boost their performance. This strategy is proving effective in raising standards. When English was identified as a weakness the school reacted strongly and introduced many initiatives to improve standards. When it became clear that standards in mathematics were too low in 2003, the school again reacted by introducing a battery of initiatives to raise pupils' attainment. A persistent barrier to raising standards is the frequent changes in subject leaders caused by shifts in staffing. Most are new to their roles and do not have a good understanding of how to drive up standards effectively. They are quick to identify resource issues as areas for improvement but slow to get to the heart of the issue, which has more to do with identifying weaknesses in teaching and improving the quality of pupils' learning. The school is well aware of this deficiency and has plans to develop the roles of subject leaders so that they are more effective in raising standards.
35. Teaching staff, support staff and governors are strongly committed to raising standards and they work well together as a team with good guidance provided by the acting headteacher and his deputy. The deputy headteacher has been particularly successful in supporting developments in ICT. The Goldsmiths' Company have helped to provide a good computer suite and the subject leader, together with the deputy headteacher, has managed provision well. This concerted effort has been effective in raising standards. There is also a strong commitment to providing good learning opportunities for all pupils. This is demonstrated by the good levels of care for all and an insistence on ensuring that all are fully included in all aspects of school life. The co-ordinator for provision for pupils with special educational needs manages the provision well and the governors attend satisfactorily to their responsibilities. Pupils from different ethnic background and those who speak languages other than English at home are all welcomed as part of the school family. Newcomers are quickly integrated into all aspects of school life. Governors find the difficulty of recruiting staff somewhat daunting at times. Nevertheless, they have been successful in finding enough teachers to keep the school functioning soundly and maintaining satisfactory provision for all pupils.
36. The strong emphasis on English, and more recently mathematics, has contributed to an imbalance in the amount of teaching time allocated to each subject. Insufficient time is now

spent on science, for example. Also time is not always used efficiently. Some teaching sessions are too long and lessons do not always start on time.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	613 533	Balance from previous year	12 799
Total expenditure	551 385	Balance carried forward to the next	74 947
Expenditure per pupil	2 743		

37. The school's finances are managed prudently. The governing body had accrued a large surplus at the end of the last financial year but most of this was appropriately earmarked for building projects that included re-roofing part of the school, improving the toilets and resurfacing the playground. One particularly welcome initiative was the recent extension of partitions between the open plan classrooms. This has substantially reduced the noise that travels from one to the other and has made a significant improvement in pupils' learning environment. The school secretary helps to maintain all accounts meticulously. The expenditure per pupil is below the national average but the school benefits from substantial grants from Goldsmiths' Company. Overall, taking into consideration pupils' satisfactory achievement and the sound quality of education provided, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. Children start in morning nursery when they are four and then spend two or three terms full time in reception. Several have attended the pre-school playgroup which opens for two afternoons each week and is run by the nursery teacher, which promotes good curriculum planning across the early years. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very well led and managed and staff work very well together, constantly reflecting on how to improve their practice. Care for children's welfare, health and safety is very good.
39. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Teaching in the nursery is very good and it is good in the reception classes, so that children achieve well overall. Resources are good and staff organise activities imaginatively so that a great enthusiasm for learning is generated. Activities are planned in great detail and good use is made of the very good number of adult helpers available, including staff, students and parents. The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, and there is a good balance between child initiated and adult directed learning. Resources are good but there is limited storage so teachers often have to store things at home. Very good assessment records are made on a daily basis and these are used well to plan activities. As a result, accurate assessments of progress help teachers to build on what children already know. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good in the nursery, which has a well designed outside area with a wide range of good quality equipment. This promotes a very productive outside learning environment. Although reception children use it, a lack of direct access restricts learning opportunities.
40. Children who are on the school's special needs register achieve well, as do those who are at the early stages of speaking English. Teachers are very aware of the needs of individuals and are always careful to make certain that all children fully understand what is required. Staff have worked very hard on developing good relationships with parents and their efforts are having a positive impact on children's learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum has changed since the previous inspection so direct comparisons cannot be made, although it is clear that there have been many improvements in the last three years.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although children's personal skills are poor when they start in the nursery, teaching is very good so children settle very quickly to classroom routines.
- Relationships with parents are close and this is proving beneficial to children's learning.
- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- Very good relationships enable children to feel confident and accept the rules.

Commentary

41. The personal, social and emotional development of children is well below average when they start school. Children achieve well and by the start of Year 1, although many children are close to attaining the early learning goals, most do not meet the standards normally expected because they have weak social skills. Many lack confidence in trying new activities and are poor at initiating ideas or find it difficult to work harmoniously in a group. Teaching is good. Teachers observe children carefully and use their knowledge of individuals to seek ways to develop sociability. A good example of this was seen in the reception class where the teacher encouraged a child who was standing alone to join other children in washing the tricycles.

Children who attend the afternoon playgroup sessions have a very good relationship with the nursery teacher before they start in the nursery. This helps them to settle in quickly and confidently. The close relationship with parents allows teachers to support children particularly well as this close association helps staff to appreciate children's learning needs more fully.

42. Specialist teachers provide very good support for children who speak little or no English. The special teaching assistant speaks Turkish and she is particularly good at helping Turkish speaking children to settle comfortably into classroom routines. The clear boundaries and the consistent role models set by the adults ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that most quickly learn the correct way to behave. Children develop a good understanding of classroom conventions and settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss. The excellent teamwork of the adults in both classes provides the children with very good role models of co-operative behaviour. The majority of children concentrate on their tasks but many are passive rather than enquiring. The supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident to seek help when required. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering a question. When children do not conform, they are treated firmly but fairly, so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group.
43. Children are constantly encouraged to experiment with new experiences, such as plunging their hands and arms into coloured shaving foam to feel the texture and smell the scent. Activities such as sitting in a circle and speaking about their feelings promote pupils' emotional development well. However, several pupils find it very hard to articulate their thoughts and remain silent whilst others are more talkative. Some children are able to talk about their feelings and say, for example, that going to a friend's house to play makes them happy and having to go to bed when they want to stay up makes them sad. All staff support children well and constantly reinforce appropriate social behaviour and seize opportunities to involve all children in all activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children have poorly developed speaking skills when they start school.
- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills, and teaching is good.

Commentary

44. Most children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in this area by the start of Year 1. However, children achieve well from their low starting point. The main areas where pupils experience difficulty are in being able to articulate their thoughts and express opinions. Many have a very narrow vocabulary and find it very difficult to respond to questions. Language is poorly developed. They enjoy stories but early reading skills are underdeveloped. In writing, many are unable to hold a pencil with enough control to form recognisable and correctly formed letters. Children find great difficulty in using their knowledge of sounds to write new words or to attempt simple sentences.
45. Good teaching was seen in the reception class where a well organised and stimulating range of activities, based on the story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff, had been planned. Here children achieved well because the teaching was stimulating. Children thought of adjectives for the troll, joined in the repetitive language of the story and thought of alternative endings. They acted out the story whilst wearing masks and several used tabletop toys to retell the story quietly to themselves in their own words. Others enjoyed using simple dictionaries to find words that, like 'troll', begin with 'tr'. A Turkish speaking student translated for Turkish children so they were

able to become fully involved in the activities. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to talk and listen purposefully as, for example, by inviting visitors such as the crossing patrol lady and the community police officer to the classroom for talk about their work. Adults take every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary through probing questioning, but most pupils are generally not very forthcoming and need a good deal of encouragement to speak. In the nursery, a very good session was observed where a parent helper supported children well as they studied tadpoles through a magnifying glass. Here opportunities were grasped to extend vocabulary and explain the meaning of words.

46. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, but teachers have to work hard to ensure all pupils contribute. No children in the reception class could read independently at the time of the inspection, but all had positive attitudes to books. Most children use picture clues well to 'tell the story' and a few pupils can use their knowledge of sounds to look at the initial sound in a word and make a good guess. Several know a few of the words that children in the reception class are expected to recognise by sight. Children take home books to share with parents as well as letters and their associated sounds, which they have to learn. This consolidates and extends their learning well. The school has too narrow a variety of books that match children's early stages of development so the class teacher has made several of her own which children enjoy reading. Teaching in this area is good and children's progress is carefully recorded. There is a very good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children learn to read and write. Teachers plan many opportunities to write both informally, such as when making out shopping lists in the farm shop, or more formally, such as writing about their journeys. There is a wide range of achievement, extending from those who are still 'play writing' to those who can write 'I went on a train' unaided. However, all pupils are developing at a good rate and are making good progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's weak language skills constrain their mathematical development.
- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures that most children achieve well.
- Staff seize opportunities to promote children's mathematical development through discussion and by directing children towards appropriate activities.

Commentary

47. By the end of reception most children are unlikely to meet all the early learning goals. Where children fail to meet the goals it is because they have impoverished language and communication skills. For example, they do not use mathematical language when adding and subtracting in practical activities, or understand terms such as 'heavier' or 'lighter' when weighing. Their mathematical ideas and methods for problem solving are underdeveloped, reflecting weak thinking and reasoning skills. However, teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Computer programs are used well for presenting mathematical games and pupils have constant access to them. There is a wide and practical curriculum. In the reception class children compare the sizes of their feet, make tally charts of their favourite coloured toothbrush and use apples and oranges to add and subtract. Children in the nursery thread slices of different fruit on bamboo skewers to make a repeating sequence or pattern. These activities provide very good opportunities for language development and help to extend knowledge and understanding. Children in the reception class recognise different coins, which they spend in the Farm Café. Very good teaching and learning was observed in the nursery where activities were set up to develop a thorough understanding of 'four'. One group of four children made fire engine collages with four wheels and four windows whilst another group made straw puppets needing four hats and four faces. The very clear focus on the aim of the

activity by the teacher and her assistant resulted in very good development of pupils' mathematical understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

48. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display and photographs show a wide and interesting curriculum. Children in the nursery know that tadpoles turn into frogs. Reception children make Divali cards, take part in the Christmas Nativity and are beginning to understand that different cultures have different beliefs. They cook and make sandwiches and find out about textures and changes to materials when heated. Children confidently use the computer's mouse and screen tools to access programs to support their literacy, numeracy and artistic development. They follow simple routes based on stories such as 'Rosie's Walk' that develop an understanding of how maps work. Children appreciate that different occupations contribute to their community by talking to the wide range of visitors. It is noticeable that many children show an unusual lack of curiosity for finding things out and are reticent about asking questions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

49. It is not possible to make a judgement about overall provision in this area of learning as too little teaching and learning was observed. However, photographs and activities seen in passing indicate that standards are similar to those usually seen in most schools. Nursery children develop their manipulative skills well by using hammers, saws and nails to make wall hangings, which they then decorate in various ways. These activities help them to develop their manipulative skills well. Reception children were seen developing upper body strength on the climbing frame and they used their leg muscles well when using the wheeled vehicles. Photographs show pupils moving in a variety of ways in physical education sessions in the hall and using a variety of construction toys. Children in the reception class do not have so much access to construction sets as those in the nursery because they are less well resourced.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

50. Insufficient teaching and learning was seen to make a judgement about standards or provision overall. The nursery has a purpose built and very well resourced role play area where visitors are treated to pretend cups of tea. Groups of children dress up and take on the roles of different members of families and enjoy playing at being firemen, doctors, nurses or policemen. Staff join in well and become involved, pointing out, for example, where the fire is and suggesting that onlookers use their mobile 'phones to call the fire brigade. Children enjoy washing vehicles and sweeping the playground, imitating what they have seen their parents doing. All the vehicles are parked in numbered bays, which supports learning about number well. It was noticeable that pupils did not make up the usual range of imaginative games and stories and staff have to work very hard to encourage role play. The reception class has less opportunity than the nursery to develop this area in the classroom as it has a fewer resources, especially small toys, dressing up clothes and easy access to the outside area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards by the end of Year 6 are much higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Good teaching and a generous time allocation help pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and good relationships help them to learn effectively.
- Inconsistent monitoring of teaching means that good practice in areas such as the use of assessment is not shared.
- Many pupils lack verbal skills and have a limited vocabulary and this restricts their attainment in reading and writing.

Commentary

51. Pupils' achievement is good overall; it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Although pupils achieve at a reasonable rate in Years 1 and 2, standards are below average by the end of Year 2. This is because many start from a low base and also because a significant proportion of pupils have limited speaking and listening skills. However standards have been improving, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. There are several reasons for this improvement. Firstly, the school has allocated a greater proportion of teaching time to reading and the extended sessions have contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of pupils' reading. Secondly, the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is good. Teachers have taken successful steps to improve the standards of boys' writing by using material that appeals particularly to boys' interests. Finally, good support is given to those pupils whose first language is not English and to those with poor levels of literacy. Pupils are willing to answer questions in oral work but, because their replies are often too brief and factual, they miss opportunities to develop their thinking and learning skills through talk. In their responses to reading, pupils are more confident in dealing with the factual content of books rather than analysing and speculating about their content. However, good teaching in Year 6 is helping more pupils to be able to discuss aspects of the plot and to consider narrative from the perspective of different characters. In discussions with pupils, most said that they enjoyed reading and many have a good knowledge of children's literature.
52. The school places a high priority on teaching pupils to read. Reading is taught systematically and thoroughly. The school uses a good system to teach pupils the sounds represented by the letters of the alphabet. Pupils gain a good understanding of phonics. There is also a strong emphasis on helping pupils to recognise common everyday words by sight. Although standards are below average by the end of Year 2, strong foundations for further learning are established. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop an enthusiasm for reading and most attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils find difficulty in applying their knowledge of phonics to writing. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing is below average in terms of accuracy and organisation. Although standards in writing are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and most pupils write satisfactory narrative pieces, the verbal reasoning difficulties of many mean that they lack competence in producing poetry and creative compositions.
53. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in developing speaking and listening skills but many find difficulty in understanding the full meaning of everyday words. Many have severely limited English speaking skills when they start school. Although most develop a reasonable knowledge of language, a significant proportion have a narrow, poorly developed vocabulary. Those who speak English at home often do not speak confidently and many answer questions in single words rather than in full sentences. Teachers work hard to extend their vocabulary and increase their understanding. Those whose mother tongue is not English are also well supported. All staff

constantly encourage them to become involved in activities rather than remain on the sidelines. There is a strong emphasis on making sure that all pupils are fully included in all activities. The Turkish speaking specialist teaching assistant visits regularly with the specialist teacher for pupils with English as an additional language. They work alongside teachers and pupils and are effective in assisting pupils to learn English quite quickly. Parents from the Turkish community say that they are pleased with the progress their children make.

54. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good; it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. In the good lessons, there is a brisk pace and pupils are clearly motivated. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher when they looked at the reasons for the success of the ever popular novel 'The Secret Garden'. They respond well to their teacher's emphasis on aiming high and this helps to develop the good attitudes to learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed reading out a play script where they demonstrated confidence and showed that they could read with expression. Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour help them to enjoy their work and to make good progress in most lessons. However, teachers' questioning skills are limited and they do not often pose questions designed to challenge and extend pupils' thinking.
55. Teachers share the planning of work and regularly discuss what is best for the pupils. Senior staff monitor teachers' lessons and their evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning are helpful. However, the sharing of good practice and reaching a common agreement on the most effective ways of raising standards have not been systematic or fully clarified. This, coupled with the significant turnover of teachers, has resulted in inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Procedures for assessment are clear and used to set individual pupils' targets. However, the results are not always used to help teachers to plan lessons that precisely meet pupils' learning needs.
56. The subject leader is new and has not yet had enough time to have a major impact on improving standards. It is clear, however, that the leadership of the subject is good and provision is managed satisfactorily. The subject leader is energetic and has a businesslike approach to raising standards. Progress since the last inspection has been good and standards are significantly higher than they were then. The Goldsmith's Company has been very supportive and the additional funding that they have supplied has been used well to improve resources.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Pupils use their language and literacy skills in many other areas of the curriculum. Their increasing proficiency in reading is used well to tackle written instructions and to respond to cues in computer programs. Pupils complete written answers in science and write about different counties in geography. Most teachers encourage the use of specialist vocabulary, especially in English and religious education. The library has sufficient texts to support all subjects. However, in mathematics and science, teachers miss opportunities to explore ideas and the meaning of words and this impedes achievement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good overall, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Computers are used well to extend and consolidate learning.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' widely varying stages of development and so the lower attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they should.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that result in uneven achievement both within and between classes.

Commentary

58. Overall pupils' achievement is good. It is mostly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Many pupils find great difficulty with problems that involve language. Also many have poorly developed speaking and listening skills and a narrow vocabulary. These factors contribute to pupils' difficulty in retaining and remembering information. Also teachers in Years 2 to 4 do not always match tasks with sufficient precision to enable all pupils to succeed and to achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils do well to attain average standards by the end of Year 6.
59. Standards are much the same as in the last inspection in Year 6, but those in Year 2 have declined. This is partly due to changes in the community that the school serves. There are now more pupils who have limited English speaking skills. They are well supported and most learn to speak English quickly but their inability to fully understand some of the questions posed constrains their achievement, especially in Years 1 and 2.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teaching in most of the lessons seen was good but it was inconsistent. The teaching in more than half of the lessons seen was at least good and in a significant proportion it was very good but in one lesson it was unsatisfactory. Teaching is particularly good in Year 1 where the good foundations laid in the Foundation Stage are consolidated well. It is also remarkably good in Years 5 and 6 where pupils' progress accelerates and their achievement is particularly good. Teaching for the pupils in the middle part of the school is less secure and their achievement falters. There are several reasons for this. Teaching does not always address the needs of all pupils and the lower attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they should. There are occasions when teachers too readily assume that pupils understand the vocabulary that they are introduced to. For example, the term 'frequency' was introduced in one lesson but the meaning of this word was not explored in depth to ensure a thorough understanding by all pupils. There has been a long history of staffing difficulties and problems over the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced replacement teachers. This has resulted in interruptions in pupils' learning.
61. In one very good lesson in Year 1 and another in Year 6 computers were used well to extend pupils' learning. The teaching in the lesson on Year 1 was brisk and innovative. During the first part of the lesson, pupils learned about the pattern of even and odd numbers. They were excited by the learning and one shouted out, 'I can see the pattern'. They used computers well to assemble data in sets prior to making graphs and during the final part of the lesson they sat in rows to make a 'human graph' to illustrate the different hair colours in the class. These pupils also understood other graphs so, for example, their interpretation of the graph about the temperatures over the next five days helped them to decide what clothes to wear each day. The teacher demonstrated that she had high expectations of pupils' performance by introducing the faster learners to spreadsheets. They showed exceptionally good understanding for it is unusual for pupils in Year 1 to be able to reach this level of competence. In Year 6, pupils used the Internet and computer programs very effectively to extend their understanding of how to construct bar graphs and pie charts to illustrate data. Great enthusiasm for learning was generated in this lesson. However, teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in Year 2 where the pupils spent far too long sitting on the carpeted area in front of the teacher learning about how to tell the time on digital and analogue clocks. This lesson took too little account of pupils' widely varying stages of development and provided too little time for practical activities.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school analyses its results carefully and accurately identifies areas of weakness in pupils' performance. A concerted effort has been made to raise standards and this has been particularly successful for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Resources have been improved and a weekly club is organised during which pupils are encouraged to play board games that assist them in extending number skills. Attendance at the club has been disappointing but a mathematics evening for parents was well attended. Staff have been given extra training, consultants have made

recommendations and visiting mathematics teachers have advised. One particularly effective initiative has been the use of computer programs that support pupils as they go through units of work and a good Internet site that enables them to extend and consolidate their learning. This initiative has proved popular and has helped to develop an enthusiasm for the subject. Once a month there is a well planned mathematical investigation session across the school. During this session pupils focus on imaginative problem solving activities. These have included baking cakes and selling them for a profit and planting bulbs with the object of selling the flowers for a profit. These activities generate an enthusiasm for the subject and promote reasoning skills well. Discussions with pupils show that most enjoy their work. Many feel that computers are particularly effective in supporting their learning but programs are not always pitched at the right level and that tasks are sometimes too easy for the faster learners.

63. Pupils' progress is analysed against targets set to check on whether they all are achieving as well as expected. The school's analyses show that most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and in Years 5 and 6 progress is mostly good. Where pupils are not doing as well as expected the reasons for apparent underachievement are explored. Specific factors that contribute to underachievement, such as irregular attendance, particular language difficulties or gaps in prior learning, are identified and action is taken. Booster classes are provided and certain pupils are invited to a special homework club. One factor that is not explored fully is the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored but not always rigorously enough to identify the areas of weakness that need to be eradicated.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunities to use their numeracy skills in different subjects. In history they study the dates of significant events that are set out on 'time lines'. They practise addition and subtraction skills when they work out how long ago events occurred and, for example, how much longer Queen Victoria reigned than did Henry VIII. In geography they learn about grids and how to describe a six-figure map reference. In Year 6 pupils have produced good graphs as part of their scientific study of insulation that illustrate the time liquids took to cool when insulated with different materials.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is not practical enough and does not sufficiently match the differing needs of pupils.
- There is a good focus on teaching scientific vocabulary but weaknesses in pupils' language and thinking skills contribute to a lack of ability to retain information and this has an adverse impact on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils take care with their written work, which reinforces their literacy skills well.
- Pupils' achievement is best in the area of studying life and living processes.

Commentary

65. Standards are below average, which indicates a decline since the previous inspection when they were reported as average. However, whilst the proportion of pupils that attain the national target of Level 4 in the tests for pupils in Year 6 is now higher than it was, the proportion who attain the higher Level 5 standard is now well below the national average. Whilst most pupils have a good understanding of life and living processes, their ability to conduct enquiries, to investigate and to solve problems are the weakest areas. Pupils' work is generally well presented with good diagrams and clear illustrations.
66. The statutory teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 show that the proportion of pupils that attain the national target of Level 2 is close to the national average but no pupils attain the

higher Level 3 standard and this reduces the school's overall performance. An analysis of test results indicates that most pupils do not retain the information that they have been taught in lessons very well. Many pupils do not have a sufficiently wide scientific vocabulary to enable them to understand test questions or communicate answers at an appropriate level.

67. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Year 1, reflecting good teaching. As pupils become older, their achievement becomes unsatisfactory overall. This is partly because of weaknesses in teaching but also because many pupils have levels of thinking and language skills that are not sufficiently well developed to enable them to understand and interpret what they are taught. Despite teachers' strong emphasis on explaining scientific terms in lessons, most pupils do not develop a depth of subject specific vocabulary because there are too few practical sessions that allow them to apply and practise the terminology they have been taught.
68. Teaching is unsatisfactory because pupils do not always learn enough. The two unsatisfactory lessons both showed teachers' lack of expertise in matching work to the needs of all pupils. Teachers cover the curriculum well by following a nationally recommended planning framework. However, the majority lack confidence in teaching and organising practical work for the whole class. Consequently, pupils are given too little opportunity to carry out their own experiments and devise different ways to record their results. Where teaching is more practical, for example when using a stopwatch to investigate the way the heart rate changes after exercise, pupils' achievement is better. Most lesson planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning to ensure that teaching is pitched at an appropriate level for all groups of pupils. In addition, teachers' marking generally does not identify what pupils should do to improve. Teachers emphasise the need to label diagrams and present written work neatly and pupils respond well, paying good attention to their presentation, which reinforces their literacy skills well. Pupils show interest in their work, behave well and say that they enjoy the subject.
69. Raising standards in science has not been a main priority and does not feature in the school development plan. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject leader is new and her role does not encompass the monitoring of teaching and learning and does not explicitly focus on improving standards. However, the acting headteacher has recently arranged for the subject manager to have regular non-contact time to address the issues. Also a good initiative has been introduced recently that ensures that pupils in all classes experience a monthly science investigation designed to raise standards. However, teachers have not as yet had training to give them the knowledge, skills and ideas to do this well. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, the percentage of time allocated to the subject is below the national average. Also the length of some lessons is too long and this does not represent good use of time. The younger pupils in particular find it difficult to concentrate for long periods and so their learning is not always as productive as it should be.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use computers confidently and develop a good range of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- There are examples of very good teaching that helps pupils to learn new skills rapidly.
- A good planning framework helps to promote the systematic teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

70. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 so that most are likely to attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and most are on course to attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were average.
71. Pupils in Years 1 learn how to use computers to create graphs of data that they collect in mathematical investigations. In Year 2, pupils develop word processing skills as they use computers to compose short stories. They also use painting programs to create delicately coloured pictures based on geometric shapes and intersecting lines.
72. Pupils In Year 6 are very good at finding their way around the Internet which they use well for finding sites that help them to revise and extend skills in, for example, mathematics and science, or when finding information about the Aztecs in history. They are confident, quick and efficient when using computers to open their own files, to transfer material from one file to another, to create literary compositions as part of their work in English and to decide how to illustrate data in mathematics. They use email to send letters to their pen pals about once a fortnight and enjoy playing adventure games as a special treat on Fridays. They demonstrate well developed skills when preparing presentations that include illustrations taken from the Internet combined with their own commentary. When making a presentation to the class about their favourite author, for example, they use the computerised whiteboard competently to present their material.
73. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In one very good lesson in Year 1, pupils visited the computer suite for a data handling exercise. Here work was carefully matched to pupils' varying stages of development. The slower learners used computers well to sort data on vehicles into sets whilst the middle group performed a similar exercise at a more advanced level with larger numbers involved. The most able pupils in the group had been introduced to spreadsheets and were using the grid well to enter their data. This indicated that the teacher had high expectations of their performance. All groups were appropriately challenged and all learned effectively. The computer suite was also used well in a very good lesson for pupils in Year 6. Again all groups were appropriately challenged and all made very good progress during the lesson. In both lessons the teachers demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of how to use computers effectively. Also both had assessed pupils' attainment well and had used these assessments astutely to plan the next steps in learning for each group. The pupils in Year 6 knew how to adjust the difficulty presented in the mathematics program they were using so that it provided them with tasks that were neither too easy nor too hard. This contributed to successful learning. The development of these skills shows that the school's curriculum is relevant to pupils' learning needs and to the learning environment to which they will be exposed in the future.
74. The school has recently introduced a good planning framework, which maps out the skills, knowledge and understanding that has to be taught each term. Teachers use this well for planning lessons and fill in the associated records when they assess pupils' attainment and progress after each term's work schedule.
75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The deputy headteacher supports developments in this subject well. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and good technical ability. The computer suite is used well by each class, who visit it at least twice each week. Pupils say that they enjoy the subject and feel that it makes a major contribution to their learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Computers are used well in other subjects. In mathematics, for example, they are used to illustrate data in different ways through the use of coloured graphs, charts or diagrams. In Year 2, pupils develop word processing skills as they use computers to compose short stories. They

also use painting programs to create delicately coloured pictures based on geometric shapes and intersecting lines. They are used well for research in many subjects. In one unsatisfactory lesson in English the teacher had not ensured that the computers were capable of accessing the web sites that she had studied on her own computer. Consequently pupils did not learn enough during the lesson. However, this was not typical. Generally the computer suite is used well for supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Work in history and geography was sampled.

77. In one **geography** lesson good teaching resulted in good learning by pupils in how to compare two contrasting localities and showed that pupils had a good understanding of how to interpret Ordnance Survey maps. The area around the school is used well as a geographical resource by all age groups. The leadership and management role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped and does not encompass monitoring the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement, evaluating the curriculum or the responsibility for monitoring or raising standards.
78. One particularly good **history** lesson was seen in Year 2 where the teacher and the pupils dressed in Victorian clothes and the classroom was rearranged to simulate a Victorian schoolroom. The pupils quickly adopted the roles of Victorian scholars and trembled at the teacher's wrath as she criticised their attempts to chalk neat writing on their 'slates'. This provided a powerful learning environment. The pupils gained a good insight into how schools have changed over the last century. In another good lesson for pupils in Year 1 the teachers' skilful use of artefacts helped pupils to gain a good appreciation of the unique atmosphere of the Olympic Games. They participated in a lively discussion on how the athletes must have felt. Overall, however, the amount of time given to the subject is minimal and this hinders pupils' achievement.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although teaching is only satisfactory, achievement is good because the school ensures that the religious education curriculum is widely supported through assemblies and links with the community.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the major world faiths.
- Work is usually well presented and pupils use their literacy skills well to write effectively.

Commentary

79. Standards meet the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus, as was found at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is good. The school places equal emphasis on helping pupils to recognise the importance of the beliefs and values of their own family and friends as well as developing a knowledge of the major world faiths. This has a positive impact on their learning. Teaching and learning are sound overall, with some examples of good teaching. Teachers have an informed approach and are good at giving pupils the confidence to share views and ideas. For example, pupils in Year 5 produced some thoughtful work on the beliefs and festivals of Judaism. The work of pupils in Year 2 showed a good understanding of Christian symbols whilst pupils in Year 6 wrote in considerable detail on the subject, 'What I know about Buddhism.'

80. Religious education is well supported in assemblies by the visits of representatives from the local churches and a carefully organised programme of selected themes. Adults speak regularly at assemblies and encourage school visits to the churches to help support their understanding of different faiths and the use and meaning of different artefacts. For example, pupils in Year 4 have written about their visit and explained carefully the importance of the symbolic artefacts and church furniture. In one assembly the teacher skilfully developed the theme of journeys by linking a packed modern suitcase to the flight of the Israelites from Egypt. Pupils' studies on Islam, Judaism and Buddhism promote multicultural awareness well.
81. Teachers encourage pupils to make good use of their literacy skills in religious education when reading and recording work which is well presented and informative. The curriculum is well led by a capable and committed co-ordinator.
82. The co-ordinator provides good leadership which has a clear focus on improving standards further. Effective teamwork and collaboration ensure successful and comprehensive curriculum coverage.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects individually, because not enough teaching was seen nor was there enough evidence to judge achievement. However, work was sampled in art and design and physical education. Music and design and technology were not inspected.

83. Pupils are introduced to a good range of different media in **art and design**. In Year 1 pupils demonstrate good skills in weaving with different materials and have created a wonderful elephant made from woven coloured strips of paper. In Year 2, pupils thoroughly enjoyed using clay to make decorated tiles. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the computerised whiteboard was used well to study the fine detail in a Dutch painting of hollyhocks. This inspired the pupils to use paint or pastels to create their own highly detailed pictures. In discussions pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject and would like more time for painting and studying the work of other artists. The Internet is used well to support learning. For example, classes visit the National Gallery web site to study artists and their work.
84. Three lessons were seen in **physical education**. Although no judgements can be made about overall provision, it is clear from teachers' planning that the subject is well established in the school's curriculum. Planning also shows that very good attention is paid to teaching swimming but there is a lack of balance between gymnastics, dance and games in curricular time allocations. Pupils have limited opportunities to develop skills beyond lessons as there are no competitive representative teams. In the lessons seen pupils showed great enthusiasm for the subject and tackled tasks seriously. In one games lesson, younger pupils enjoyed practising hitting a ball but their tactical awareness was limited. Older boys and girls showed a greater understanding of skills in netball and worked hard to improve their skills. Pupils in Year 2 showed positive attitudes and a thoughtful approach as they demonstrated their ability to work out their own sequences of movements in gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship was sampled.

85. Social and personal skills are developed through participation in community events and through the encouragement of responsible action. The school does good charity work and teachers ensure that pupils have a particular awareness of people worse off than themselves. Evidence from pupils' work shows that an understanding of citizenship is enhanced by work in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6, for example, learn about developing a balanced view and begin to learn to become informed citizens when they produce their own interesting news articles. Good work is done on personal safety and projects that include an emphasis on healthy eating.

Although the school has a strong pastoral tradition, extra-curricular activities are limited and this checks the development of the pupils' skills of participation and responsible action. This area of the curriculum benefits from the experience and expertise of visiting speakers representing different organisations such as the Police and Fire Services. All pupils have regular personal, social and health education lessons which include appropriate teaching of health, drugs and sex education. This good programme includes aspects of citizenship. Teachers lead discussions on environmental questions and pupils have a good understanding of conservation issues. However, opportunities are missed to support citizenship through, for example, the establishment of a school council or a whole school recycling initiative.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	5
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

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