

# INSPECTION REPORT

**All Saints CE Primary School**

Chatham, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118639

Headteacher: Mr S B Kay

Reporting inspector: Dr Melvyn J Bradshaw  
6169

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 189943

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Magpie Hall Road Chatham Kent
Postcode:	ME4 5JY
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr L West
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Melvyn Bradshaw	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Janet Gill	Team inspector	English	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		English as an additional language	
		Music	
		Under fives	
Richard Brent	Team inspector	Art	How well is the school led and managed?
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Brian Espiner	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Information technology	
		Equal opportunities	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has 285 pupils who attend full-time from Reception to Year 6. The number of boys and girls is more or less equal. Of the children in Reception, 20 were not yet five years old, at the time of the inspection. The school is over-subscribed and there is relatively little pupil mobility. The majority of pupils (88 per cent) are white. The remainder are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, but most are of Indian descent. There are three refugee pupils from Kosovo. There are 35 pupils (12 per cent) whose first language is not English. The background of pupils is generally well below average; 69 pupils (24 per cent) claim free school meals, which is above the average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is high; 114 (40 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, of these seven have statements. Attainment on entry is below average, especially in relation to language development and children's vocabulary. During the period of the inspection, the headteacher had been seconded to support another school. The deputy headteacher was acting headteacher during this period.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

All Saints Primary School is a well organised and happy community. It has improved rapidly and is now a very effective school. Pupils progress well and achieve standards that are average or above; in addition their attitudes to learning are high. The quality of teamwork is outstanding and this helps to ensure consistently good teaching. All staff want the school, and its pupils, to succeed. The school has broadly average income; it uses its resources well and provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very good; he is well supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors.
- Teaching is good overall, it is never less than satisfactory and over a quarter is very good; it is especially good in Years 5 and 6.
- All staff in the school work very well together as a team, this helps to create a happy learning environment.
- Pupils make good progress during their time in the school, as a result they achieve mostly average or higher standards.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language is good; these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Tolerance and mutual support are always in evidence.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development, especially moral and social aspects.
- The quality of care and support given to pupils is high.

#### **What could be improved**

- Continue to raise standards in mathematics and science, so that they reach the same high standards found in English.
- Minor areas for improvement include the need to develop pupils' use of the library and their research skills, the consistency of the quality of marking and the detail in some of the written reports sent home to parents.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When it was inspected last in September 1996, All Saints Primary School was found to have significant weaknesses. Since then it has improved rapidly and all areas of weakness identified in the previous report have been successfully dealt with. The results achieved by its pupils, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, have risen in almost every year since 1995, often by a large amount. The improvement in information technology is dramatic. Teaching, which was unsatisfactory, is now good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The leadership and management of the school are now very

good. Teamwork is excellent; headteacher, staff and governors work as a very effective team. The school is well placed to build on its recent improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	B	B	A
mathematics	C	C	C	A
science	B	C	C	B

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

There has been a marked improvement in results since 1996; the rate of improvement is greater than that nationally. As a result, standards when children leave the school are generally similar to the national picture, and above that of similar schools. The school is meeting its targets well. Improvement is also evident in religious education and information technology; in the latter subject, standards are well above average. In other subjects, standards are at least satisfactory, and have improved, especially in art and design and technology. Although pupils in Key Stage 1, and children who are under five, make mostly good progress overall, standards, by the age of seven, are not yet high enough, especially in mathematics and science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good; they are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They enjoy their lessons and want to contribute.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Despite the narrow staircases, cramped classrooms and small playground very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. They are keen to help and their respect of others is excellent. Tolerance and understanding are always evident. Relationships are very good, fostered by the positive examples of staff.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The school monitors attendance well and encourages pupils to attend regularly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
79 Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

All teaching is at least satisfactory, and 26.6 per cent of lessons are very good. English teaching is very good for pupils aged seven to eleven years, and good elsewhere in the school. The teaching of mathematics is good. The best teaching occurs in Years 5 and 6. Strengths of teaching include good planning, outstanding relationships with children and high quality pupil management. In the best lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm inspires pupils. The school is successful in usually meeting the needs of all its pupils well. Occasional weaknesses include not always moving able children on quickly enough and marking that is not very helpful. Literacy is well taught across the whole curriculum; the teaching of numeracy is also good but it is not yet developed as well in other subjects. The high quality teaching helps to promote children's learning and, as a result, they make good progress. They work hard, showing interest and concentration; opportunities to develop independence in their learning are somewhat limited.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good; it is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Careful organisation of classes, effective use of the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support staff help these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good, assisted by sensitive teaching and effective use of other staff. These pupils make good progress and, by the time they leave the school, their attainment is very similar to that of other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school effectively supports pupils' personal development in a range of ways. The personal, social and health education programme is good. Moral and social development are promoted very well. Good provision is made for spiritual and cultural development, especially pupils' awareness of the wide range of cultures in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very effective procedures to care for its pupils. Assessment procedures are very good in English and mathematics. They are developing well in all areas and the results are used very effectively to set targets, organise classes and plan work. Pupils' welfare has a very high priority and procedures to promote good behaviour are excellent. As a result the school is a very orderly community. The school has good links with parents, although written reports are not always detailed enough. Parents are satisfactorily involved in the work of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior staff are very good and have resulted in the significant progress made. The support of other members of staff has helped the school to achieve the improvements expected by the school's management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, except for a minor omission from the governors' annual report. Governors are effective in working with staff to help the school move forward. They are becoming increasingly involved.



The school's evaluation of its performance	The school effectively monitors its performance and evaluates how effective it is. Planning, teaching and the quality of pupils' work are carefully monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are supported well. Resources provided for pupils with special educational needs, staff development and pupils for whom English is an additional language are used effectively. The school's information technology resources are used to very good effect. The school provides very good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Children's progress is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school sets the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• Teaching in the school is good.</li> <li>• Parents are well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are insufficient activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• There is insufficient homework and it is not consistent enough.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children do like school, they behave very well and become mature and responsible. Their progress is good because of good, well organised teaching and high expectations of pupils. The school is approachable and works well with parents. Management and leadership of the school are good. In most classes sufficient homework is set, but inspectors agree that there are occasions when it is not regular enough. Inspectors agree that activities outside lessons are limited, especially for infant children. The school has plans to improve this but the accommodation and need to stagger playtimes and lunchtimes restrict opportunities. Parents are adequately informed of their children's progress but some of the written reports lack sufficient detail.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 Standards of attainment when pupils left the school in July 1999, at the end of Year 6, were above the average in English, and similar to the average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. In all three subjects attainment has improved at a far faster rate than the national improvement. Pupils in the current Year 6 show attainment that is not quite as high. The school's targets reflect this, but it is anticipated that there will be an improvement in 2001. Inspection evidence confirms this view. The many weaknesses, identified in the previous report relating to standards, have been successfully addressed. In information technology, attainment is now well above average and there have been major improvements in art and design and technology.
- 2 In 1999, in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was similar to the national average in English and mathematics, and a little below average in science. Similarly, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well above the average in English, above the average in science, and similar to the average in mathematics. Results in all three subjects have increased significantly over the past four years, particularly in English and mathematics.
- 3 In 1999, in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was similar to the national average in reading and writing, but well below the average in mathematics. Similarly, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was similar to the average in reading, just below the average in writing and below the average in mathematics. Overall, taking account of the full range of attainment, results were below the average in reading, and well below the average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading and writing were similar to the average, but well below the average in mathematics. Since 1996, results have increased in reading and writing. In mathematics, after an initial significant rise, they have drifted lower in subsequent years, but are still better than in 1996. Inspection evidence indicates that standards currently are close to the average in reading and writing, but continue to be below the average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicated that 61 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, a very low figure, and 10 per cent of pupils were recorded as attaining the higher Level 3, below the average. Inspection evidence supports the view that relatively few pupils attain high standards in science, but most pupils achieve Level 2. The discrepancy is associated with very rigid application of the assessment criteria for science by the school.
- 4 Children join the Reception class with attainment that is below average, particularly in language and literacy. Children's vocabulary in particular is limited. Assessment of children shortly after entry to Reception confirms this low attainment, although the most recent results suggest an improvement this year, possibly reflecting the success of the Local Education Authority's current emphasis on improving provision for children under five. Children improve well during their time in Reception, but do not achieve the expected levels of attainment by the age of five in all areas. Achievement in language and literacy is below the expected standard by five. Their listening skills in particular improve. Most know that text carries meaning and retell stories from pictures, but children's vocabulary remains limited. Simple writing skills also improve steadily. However, progress in this area is adversely affected by the use of a literacy hour approach; children find it very difficult to sit and concentrate for the required length of time. Children's work in the mathematical area of learning improves well, but attainment is below the expected level by five. Children count up to 10 and match and order numbers correctly. Children's knowledge of the world gradually increases, for instance, they describe the features of some plants and use the term bulb correctly. By five, however, attainment remains below the level expected. In other areas, children achieve the expected standard by five. They use a wide range of media, mix paint well, and produce colourful, careful paintings to represent various

fruits and animals. They know the connection between the computer mouse and the pointer on the screen. Children use construction bricks well to produce higher and wider structures. They develop good physical control when moving across a range of apparatus.

- 5 Pupils in Year 2 are achieving broadly average standards in English and science. They are below average in mathematics, but above average in information technology. Attainment in religious education reflects the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils read satisfactorily and about a third are good; attainment in this area is about average. Writing skills of current pupils are less well developed and attainment is below average; few pupils achieve higher standards. Handwriting is improving. Pupils listen well, but speaking skills are less well developed. They improve as pupils move through Years 1 and 2, but they continue to show a limited vocabulary. The large amount of time devoted to English in Key Stage 1 is having a positive effect on pupils' literacy skills. These are improving and they are used well in religious education, science, geography and history. Despite generally good teaching, pupils' mathematical knowledge is below average. Few pupils attain high standards, although the majority accurately add and subtract numbers to 100 and know a range of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils' numeracy skills are not used consistently across the curriculum. In science, pupils' attainment is about average by the end of Year 2. They have a broad knowledge across all areas of science. They describe the properties of different materials and test which one would be best at keeping teddy dry. Pupils' scientific skills also develop well, especially observation and description. The range of methods used for recording is more limited. In information technology, attainment is above average; most pupils use the keyboard to input text, and control the mouse very well when using drag and drop programs. In religious education, pupils have a broad knowledge of most world faiths and know about festivals, such as Holi, and about Advent leading up to Christmas. They also appreciate that many religious ceremonies and festivals include the use of candles.
- 6 Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate attainment that is average in English, mathematics and science, and well above the expected standard in information technology. In religious education, pupils' attainment is above that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils read with accuracy and have a satisfactory understanding of what they have read. Handwriting is generally neat and joined. Pupils write using correct punctuation and reasonably accurate spelling. Sustained writing and the use of imaginative vocabulary continue to be the weakest areas. Pupils' listening skills are very good and pupils are generally confident to answer questions or share their ideas in class. Older pupils know how to use the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book, but they do not understand the classification system used in libraries. Pupils' literacy skills are satisfactory. Effective use is made of pupils' literacy skills, especially writing, in subjects such as science, geography and history. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and use independent research skills. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is about average. Pupils have sound number skills, and apply these well when solving problems. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are also satisfactory. They draw block graphs, histograms and line graphs with reasonable accuracy, but are not provided with enough opportunities to interpret data from graphs. Data handling is the least developed area of mathematics. Pupils' numeracy skills are average and used effectively to support learning in science and geography. Their knowledge of science is satisfactory, and improving well. Pupils use scientific vocabulary satisfactorily because teachers emphasise this when discussing science topics. Teachers are assisted by a good checklist of scientific vocabulary within the policy. Pupils display satisfactory skills associated with practical science, and their progress is helped because they enjoy practical activities. In information technology, attainment is well above average. Pupils use word processing facilities very well to communicate information and find out about different topics using CD-ROM. They confidently combine text and other forms of information, draw graphs and manipulate images produced, using the digital camera. They also use these skills in other subjects, such as entering data, producing graphs or for making music. Pupils' knowledge of religious education is above that expected, because of the provision of a very broad curriculum. They have a good understanding of Christianity, and of a range of other world faiths, including Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. They also appreciate some of the common features of the major religions and of the use of symbolism, such as candles and light.

- 7 Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve satisfactory standards in other subjects. The satisfactory standards identified in the previous report, in geography, history, music and physical education, have been, at least, maintained. The weaknesses in art and in design and technology have been overcome and many pupils display good standards of attainment in these subjects. In art, pupils use a range of media to good effect and appreciate the work of different artists, such as Picasso. In music, pupils sing very well and also compose simple pieces to be played on their instruments. In history, pupils' knowledge of life in past times is satisfactory, although their understanding of the passing of time is much less secure. In geography, pupils can explain river features and some characteristics of the water cycle. They follow simple maps accurately.
- 8 Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good. This is due to well organised teaching and, often, interesting lessons. Pupils are helped to achieve by the use of good questions and the full involvement of all. Achievement across the wide range of subjects is strongest in upper Key Stage 2, but this reflects good progress by all pupils in English earlier in the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have acquired a broad range of satisfactory language skills, which then helps them make good progress in other subjects. The school recognises that they have not yet helped pupils achieve sufficiently highly in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, but they are hopeful that the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy will help them succeed. At times, achievement for some of the higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently high. This is because they are not moved on to new topics or problems quickly enough.
- 9 Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress throughout the school, and often very good progress overall. This is particularly evident in their English, which then helps support learning in other subjects. The amount of progress is illustrated by the fact that, in 1999, by the time they left school, almost 90 per cent of pupils achieved at least Level 3 in English, mathematics and science. This was achieved despite over 40 per cent of pupils in the school being on the special educational needs register. This good progress is associated with well organised support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator, other teachers and classroom assistants who help pupils in the classroom. There is little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, or of different ethnic groups, by the end of Key Stage 2. Six pupils who left last year were ones for whom English was an additional language. Of these, four achieved at least Level 4 in English, mathematics and science, and two achieved Level 5 in English. The school sets appropriate targets in relation to attainment in English and mathematics for each year group, and has begun setting targets in science. The data and targets are reviewed and revised regularly. On the basis of previous assessment data, targets are sufficiently challenging. The lower targets for Year 6 pupils this year reflect the characteristics of the group; the targets for 2001 are much higher.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 10 Since the previous inspection, the promotion of positive attitudes, values and personal development continues to feature significantly in the school's work and remains a strength.
- 11 Children who are under five make good progress in their personal and social development. Children are encouraged to become independent and they make choices about their activities during 'Plan, do and review' sessions. Children are responsive and interested. They take part in all the activities provided for them with enjoyment. They take turns, co-operate well and listen carefully to instructions. Even the youngest children concentrate and persevere when activities are stimulating.
- 12 Pupils have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life. They are keen and interested in their lessons, particularly when the teacher is enthusiastic and inspiring. Very good examples were observed when older children were discussing their views of poetry and carrying out science investigations. Pupils are eager to present their work at the end of lessons and very successfully build upon others' contributions. Good examples were seen in many discussions at the end of literacy lessons. This helps pupils evaluate and reflect on their learning, and for teachers to check if knowledge has been acquired and pupils understand what has been taught. Teachers use good questioning techniques to ensure all pupils take part in discussions, are confident, attentive and listen to others.

- 13 The pupils are friendly, good-natured and enjoy coming to school. The calm, purposeful atmosphere created in the school ensures children behave very well in lessons, around the school and in the playground, despite the constraints of a cramped building and playground. Pupils are polite and trustworthy and treat the building and equipment with care. All staff are consistent in their approach to handling discipline and know the pupils very well; this is a significant factor in the very high standards of behaviour achieved. Pupils support the rules in place and understand what is expected of them. Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) help pupils to explore such issues about rules and risk taking. Parents and visitors comment favourably on the very good behaviour in the school. Exclusions are rare. The two exclusions last year, which involved two boys, were the result of firm action by the school to support its behaviour policy.
- 14 Pupils are friendly with adults and each other and relationships in the school are very good. The school is successful in promoting tolerance and respect for one another by example and through discussion. All pupils, including those from different ethnic minority origins and with special educational needs, work and play harmoniously together. All staff support pupils' personal development very well and with sensitivity, particularly through PSHE lessons. For example, Year 3 pupils discussed their feelings about trying new experiences with complete confidence.
- 15 Pupils willingly and enjoy taking on responsibility when it is offered. Pupils act as class monitors, return the registers and help tidy up. The youngest children in Reception are encouraged to clear up after their activities, which they do well with the adults. However, too few opportunities exist for older pupils to be independent in some lessons. They do not visit the library often enough to be able to develop research skills. The school is currently exploring ways to act on this situation within the constraints of the building. There is a particularly effective 'carer' system, where older pupils carry out their role with enthusiasm, particularly when looking after younger pupils. The new children in Reception could talk about their 'carer' and knew they would be looked after at lunchtime and in the playground.
- 16 Attendance is satisfactory; the school monitors it well, encouraging pupils to attend regularly. Pupils are punctual for school and sessions begin promptly. Statutory requirements are fully met.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 17 Pupils are well taught and this helps to raise their achievement and learning. Teaching is very good for pupils in Years 5 and 6. All teaching is satisfactory or better, with over 65 per cent being at least good. Very good teaching is a feature of 26 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 2 teaching is more variable than in Key Stage 1, where it is almost all at least good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection report when about 32 per cent of lessons featured unsatisfactory or poor teaching. This figure has been eliminated. The improvement is the result of more secure subject knowledge, much better planning and improved assessment. Expectations of pupils are also higher.
- 18 The teaching of children under five is good, but quite variable. It is best when children are engaged in a range of activities or when lessons are short, sharp and focussed. It is weaker where children have to sit for too long and when the literacy hour format is followed. The class teacher and support staff co-operate well and this helps to deliver an interesting curriculum to the children, despite the difficulties caused by the accommodation. Planning, the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the areas of learning are good. Activities, including those using the hall or computer, are well structured and good account is taken of the need to develop children's language and social skills. The good teaching helps promote good learning in Reception. Children concentrate well and show increasing independence. They are interested in all the activities offered, although where sessions go on for too long interest wanes, and children become restless.

- 19 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, but more variable in Key Stage 2. Here, although almost 30 per cent is very good, 40 per cent is satisfactory. Teaching that is satisfactory is mainly in the lower key stage. Teaching of English is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Geography teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. In all other subjects teaching is good overall in each key stage. Insufficient evidence is available to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in history. The strengths and weaknesses are similar throughout the school, although minor weaknesses are most evident in lower Key Stage 2. Strengths are particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, and here pupils' learning is especially good. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually at least satisfactory, and often good. Weaknesses are occasionally evident in mathematics and science. Literacy is generally well taught, and the effective use of the literacy hour is helping pupils to improve and attain average standards by the time they leave the school. Pupils' literacy skills are developed and used well in other subjects. Teachers use questions well to help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. They plan a range of writing activities in subjects such as science, religious education, history and geography. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop the skills associated with using books for research, and this aspect of independent learning does not develop sufficiently. Mathematics is taught well. The current emphasis is the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematics is used effectively to support learning in other subjects, especially science and geography, although greater use of mathematical vocabulary could be encouraged in the lower half of the school. Expectations of pupils are usually appropriately high. The organisation of classes helps teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils effectively, except that, in some lessons, not enough thought is given to ensuring higher ability pupils are challenged sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching from the co-ordinator when within the classroom or withdrawn for support. Classroom assistants also provide good support in the class, including during practical activities such as science in Years 5 and 6. Specialist teaching staff, classroom teachers and assistants work together well to ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language, are well taught. As a result, they make good progress and their learning across all subjects is generally good.
- 20 Lesson planning is good throughout the school and based on whole school plans. The best plans identify clearly what children are to learn, and take account of previous work; in other lessons the detail included is less specific. In almost all lessons, a wide range of methods is used well, although in lower Key Stage 2 the teacher sometimes talks too much and pupils are not involved sufficiently. Teachers encourage discussion and, in the best lessons, good group work is organised effectively despite the cramped accommodation. On other occasions, opportunities for independent research or group activities are missed. Pupils are managed very well, but an occasional weakness, especially in lower Key Stage 2, occurs when instructions about behaviour or paying attention are not made sufficiently clear and the teacher talks even though not all pupils are attentive. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This is an important reason for the school's success; pupils know they are valued and respond positively to this.
- 21 Within most lessons, time available is used effectively. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils work hard despite the rare use of clear time targets. The only weakness relating to time use is that in some lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, more able pupils are not moved on to more demanding work sufficiently quickly and that time is sometimes wasted when handing out equipment. Resources, including new technologies, are well used to support learning. During lessons, assessment procedures are effectively used by all teachers; this enables them to refine what they are teaching when necessary. Teachers know their pupils very well. The quality of marking is variable. All work is marked, but too often it consists merely of a series of ticks, with few comments used to help pupils improve. The best marking, for instance in the Year 3 class, includes helpful comments, encourages improvement, acknowledges when this has been achieved and comments specifically on subject content. Parents were concerned that homework was not sufficiently well organised. It is used effectively to support pupils' learning, begins in Reception and increases as pupils move through the school. It covers mainly English, mathematics and science, together with topic work. However, it is not consistent and too often consists of merely completing unfinished work.

- 22 Staff work together effectively so that pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language are taught well. As a result, these pupils learn well and make good progress. It is particularly rapid in Key Stage 2 for pupils whose first language is not English. Throughout the school good teaching helps to promote good learning. It is best in Years 5 and 6 where stimulating teaching interests pupils who then work hard and concentrate very well. Acquisition of new skills and knowledge is good, and accelerates in upper Key Stage 2.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

- 23 The school has good curricular provision. The curriculum for under fives provides satisfactory learning experiences, covering all the recommended areas for this age. The Reception teacher and support staff are helped here by the highly competent Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, with good breadth, balance and relevance. All subjects fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum or, in the case of religious education, the Kent Agreed Syllabus. There has been a definite improvement since the last inspection, when a key issue was to ensure that the curriculum for information technology and design and technology fulfilled statutory requirements. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and these are having a positive effect in raising standards.
- 24 The school has an intake of 40 pupils per year, and this adversely affects the security of long-term curricular planning. Every year the school is faced with new combinations of different ages in the various classes, and has to be very vigilant in ensuring that no subject content is repeated for any pupil, and that there is a planned progression in the acquisition of skills as children get older. The school works hard to make sure that this is the case, but it is very difficult to plan more than one year at a time.
- 25 Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils follow the National Curriculum. Individual education plans include, where necessary, pupil targets in mathematics, as well as considerations of literacy needs, or behavioural, physical or medical problems. Pupils from homes where English is not the main spoken language are also well catered for. Their needs are carefully planned for and staff give them good support. As a result, several of these pupils attain above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The school analyses test results by gender, ethnicity and prior attainment, being very aware of the need for social inclusiveness. Equality of access is ensured for all pupils. There is good opportunity for most pupils to achieve well and make good progress. Occasionally, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- 26 The inadequate accommodation adversely affects the provision of extra-curricular activities. The hall is not available at lunchtime, but is used on three evenings a week. The lack of a grassed playing area limits competitive sport with other schools. The school tries hard to overcome these difficulties in Key Stage 2, with a football club, country dancing, the choir, and a modern dance club and 'kwik' cricket in the summer. Apart from a modern dance club run by Year 6 pupils, there is no extra-curricular provision for Key Stage 1 pupils. Provision overall is unsatisfactory. There are plans for a computer club, for juniors and infants, when teething troubles with the new computer suite are overcome. The school provides successful 'Booster Classes' in English and mathematics for well-targeted groups in Year 6, in order to bring their attainment up to nationally expected levels.
- 27 The school works well with the community and other schools. The headteacher has a high profile locally, and the school has strong links with a nearby superstore and the local newspaper. A secondary school lends its hall for school productions, as the school hall is too small to fit in performing pupils and an audience at the same time. There are information technology links with other schools, and design and technology links with the University of Greenwich.

- 28 Personal, social and health education is good, with a well-planned programme timetabled for all classes. Sex education is provided in science, and all pupils learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs. PSHE lessons, along with religious education and collective worship, provide a very effective basis for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is very good.
- 29 Spiritual awareness and self-knowledge are developed well. Candles are lit for contemplation, and time is given for reflection in assemblies. These are broadly Christian in nature, but are designed to allow virtually all pupils to attend. Christianity and other beliefs are explored well in religious education. The whole caring ethos of the school adds to pupils' spiritual development, although it is not planned into all subjects of the curriculum which could accommodate awe and wonder.
- 30 Provision for moral development is very good. Themes such as 'friends and enemies' or 'resentment and forgiveness' are used in assemblies to highlight moral principles and choice, and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong very early in their school careers. Again, the school ethos, the high expectation of honesty and moral integrity, support pupils' moral development very well.
- 31 The arrangements for social development are very good. It is expected as a matter of course that girls and boys, and pupils of different ethnic origin, will be friends and work happily together, and they are, and do. Pupils with special educational needs are accepted and helped by others. There is a great deal of happiness and kindness, all actively promoted by school policies and example. Pupils develop a very good understanding of living in a community. Opportunities to develop pupils' independence are no better than satisfactory. Some of this is because of safety factors in the accommodation, which do not easily allow pupils to work unsupervised.
- 32 The arrangements for cultural development are good. The school makes very good use of its own cultural mix, and pupils are encouraged to bring examples from their culture into school. A large and colourful display about Hindu gods dominates the area outside the headteacher's office. Different religious festivals are celebrated throughout the year by all pupils. Children engage in those very English activities, maypole and morris dancing. The school could do more to arrange visits by artists of various kinds.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 33 The school provides a very supportive environment for all of its pupils and this makes a significant contribution towards their attainment. There has been improvement since the last inspection as more formal assessment procedures are now in effective use across the school. Overall, the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good and are used well to support progress. Class teachers gather a wide range of assessment results and this information is carefully recorded by the assessment co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator and shared with all teachers. This information, along with knowledge of the pupils' individual personalities, is used very well to organise classes at Key Stage 2. The careful review of assessment data throughout the school year allows for pupils to be moved into and out of different ability groups as their needs change.
- 34 The use of assessment to inform planning is working very well in English, mathematics and science. A good example is the way pupils' progress in English is monitored regularly to ensure that they are placed in the correct ability groups and are on course to meet their targets. The pupils' reading results at the end of Key Stage 1 are analysed and those who are below average receive additional literacy support at the beginning of Year 3 to help them improve. Pupils who need extra support in English, at the end of Key Stage 2, are helped in additional 'Booster Classes'. The success of this support was evident in the most recent results where nearly all of the pupils achieved their target grade. In science and mathematics both skills and knowledge are assessed. This enables teachers to identify areas of weakness and adjust their planning so lessons meet the needs of the pupils. This is particularly effective at Key Stage 2. The monitoring of pupils' attainment in the other subjects is satisfactory but less extensive; the data are used appropriately to help plan lessons.



- 35 Initial, baseline assessment is used to measure the attainment of children under the age of five during their first few weeks of school. The Reception class teacher makes appropriate use of this information to place children in different ability groups for literacy and numeracy. The individual talents and needs of pupils are monitored by class teachers and personal development is shared with parents in the annual end-of-year reports. The school successfully combines a caring atmosphere with high expectations of achievement.
- 36 The school takes great care to ensure the health, safety and well being of all pupils. Although the buildings are cramped there is careful supervision of pupils and this contributes to the smooth running of the school day. Personal awareness of health and safety among pupils is also effectively encouraged. All Year 6 pupils take part in first-aid training and were seen to carry out risk assessments before undertaking experiments in science lessons. There are good established routines in place to care for pupils with asthma and other chronic ailments. Despite the absence of a medical room, pupils who become ill at school are well cared for. There are established links with outside support agencies to offer assistance for pupils and their families. Pupils and their families can communicate with staff in an atmosphere of trust. The school's procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are excellent. The clear and positive behaviour policy is well known by pupils and used consistently by staff. This approach, combined with consistent good teaching, has created an environment where very good behaviour is implicit.
- 37 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school provides consistent encouragement to parents regarding the importance of prompt, regular attendance. Pupils with excellent attendance receive certificates each term to reward them.
- 38 The arrangements for child protection meet legal requirements. The headteacher is the named teacher with responsibility in this area and is supported by the deputy headteacher. The school follows the local authority's guidelines and members of staff are informed of this during informal discussions and through the staff handbook. Pupils are provided with a high level of protection because the staff know them so well. A more formal review of child protection procedures on a regular basis would ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of the school's routines at all times.
- 39 Responsibility for monitoring health and safety is included in the terms of reference for the governors' premises committee. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher were playing a leading role in ensuring that repairs were identified and safe practices followed. The local authority completed a risk assessment within the past year and the fire services have done an inspection of the buildings. The governors need to establish a systematic routine for carrying out risk assessments themselves in order to comply with their own policy and meet established requirements.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 40 The parents have very positive views of this popular and over-subscribed school. There was unanimous agreement in all of the completed questionnaires that teaching is good. The school has maintained its good links with parents since the last inspection. Members of both the teaching and non-teaching staff are friendly and easy to approach. Parents are encouraged to come forward and discuss any concerns about their children.
- 41 Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is good. There are regular newsletters regarding school activities. Very good information about the curriculum is included in the teaching plan of objectives provided for parents in each year group every term. Parents were appropriately informed about arrangements for the literacy and numeracy hours. The prospectus is informative and contains all of the required information. However, the governors' annual report to parents is missing details of facilities to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities. There has been some improvement in the quality of pupils' end of year reports to parents at Key Stage 1. However, at Key Stage 2 they continue to be variable in quality. The best examples are specific and clearly inform parents about their children's strengths and weaknesses in each subject and what they need to do to improve. Disappointing examples are those that only provide brief descriptions of what was covered in the subjects. General targets

are set for each pupil in the reports and reviewed with parents at the consultation meeting in the autumn term. In many cases these would be more beneficial if they were more specific. For example, some reports do not contain any targets for mathematics and when they appear they are as non-specific as 'learn number facts.'

- 42 Parents make a sound contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. The level of reading at home varies, as does the use of the home contact book. Some parents never read with their children and others do so on a regular basis. Parents who read with their children help to support standards in attainment. There is an active Parent Teacher Association and committee members organise social and fundraising events over the year. Most recently they provided the school with a stereo system, additional physical education equipment and the chairs for the new information and communication technology suite. A few parents help in the Reception class and their regular support enables the teacher to plan for a range of different group activities. Religious education lessons focused on Hinduism and Sikhism were enhanced when parents loaned their own artefacts to the school. The school welcomes all offers of help but is aware that there are significant numbers of parents who are unable to provide practical support.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 43 The school is very well led. The headteacher, current acting headteacher, staff and governors work well together and have a determination to continue to raise standards. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the issues raised then have been addressed extremely well. The headteacher has played a significant part in this process. There is a strong team of dedicated staff committed to providing high quality education for their pupils. The Governing Body fulfils all statutory obligations, except for a minor omission from the governors' annual report. The school is well placed to develop further and has good capacity in its systems and ethos for still further improvements.
- 44 The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher gives strong, professional leadership. He has many excellent qualities among which is an ability to gain the trust and support of staff, pupils and parents. He uses these skills well to produce a school which engenders deep affection and respect from all who belong to it. The hard working staff competently and enthusiastically support him. They have raised standards, often in the face of significant difficulties. For example, most pupils in the school make very good progress in their academic and behavioural standards. Relationships within the school are very good and the hard work of all staff helps to ensure the school's aims and values are effectively promoted.
- 45 Governors support the school well. They have an appropriate structure and make good use of their skills on committees. The Governing Body agrees both the school's budget and its improvement plan. It monitors educational standards and the success of the school's work satisfactorily. It also has a firm grasp of strategic planning: a good example is its unrelenting efforts to obtain a site on which to build a new school. The chair of governors, a former pupil, has a good understanding of the community that the school serves, as does the headteacher who lives a few streets away from the school. Both share a vision for the future of the school and have high expectations for its continued success.
- 46 The headteacher monitors teaching well. He understands the strengths and weaknesses within subject areas and works with staff to support and encourage improvement in weaker areas. As a result, teaching has improved since the earlier report and the staff work well as a team. Subject co-ordinators monitor the planning of their subjects well: they have a clear understanding of standards and use the information gathered to help improve standards in their areas.
- 47 The school has a sound appraisal system. It links well to the professional development of all staff and has helped to improve standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- 48 Arrangements for development planning are good. There is a clear process of consultation with staff and parents before the plan is drawn up and governors are appropriately involved in the necessary long-term planning. There are clear arrangements relating to success criteria,

responsibilities and accountabilities. Financial planning is linked to development planning: for example, the governors have spent considerable sums on building a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite as part of a considered, and successful, plan to raise standards in information technology. The school is now using educational technology very well. The school has efficient financial management systems and the administration supports the work of the teachers well. A competent financial administrator provides accurate data to enable the headteacher, chair of finance and Governing Body to monitor expenditure and to plan for unforeseen contingencies. Funds for specific purposes, such as special educational needs and literacy and numeracy training, are allocated appropriately against well-defined objectives. They are spent effectively: provision for special educational needs is good and all pupils make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

- 49 The day-to-day management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Funding is used well to provide good quality learning support assistants who play an important part in helping standards improve. Systems for record keeping and monitoring progress are first class. Baseline and assessment data from standardised tests are used effectively to set targets and priorities in the school improvement plan. As a result, the school predicts its results accurately and targets are challenging but achievable. Support from outside specialist agencies is managed well. The Governing Body is becoming increasingly informed through a hard working special educational needs governor and discharges its duties efficiently.
- 50 The Governing Body is well aware of best-value principles. It understands the quality of education provided by similar schools and evaluates its standards compared with them. However, because of a lack of data, it is not always able to evaluate whether it costs more or less than similar schools to achieve such standards. Nevertheless, the Governing Body and headteacher challenge themselves about the opportunities offered: they evaluate the level of need and question carefully the value of new initiatives. The Governing Body consults widely when considering major spending decisions, as it did with regard to the new ICT suite and it considers carefully the cost of its decisions. Suitable procedures are in place to ensure that all outside suppliers and contractors provide good value for money. The financial administrator has provided a detailed and careful analysis of the school's financial position and procedures but there has been no formal audit for over three years.
- 51 The school has a good level of well-qualified staff to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and children under the age of five. The teachers have a significant range of experience and several co-ordinators are particularly well qualified in their subject areas. They have a clear understanding of their roles and all staff work closely together to improve the standards of pupils in the school. There are well-qualified, skilful classroom assistants who provide effective additional support for pupils' literacy skills. Teachers deploy and brief classroom assistants well and the quality of the support given impacts very positively on standards.
- 52 Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is cramped, the hall is too small for the numbers of pupils, there is no playing field and the playground is not big enough. As a result, teaching, standards of attainment and the quality of learning are affected adversely, particularly in physical education, science and design and technology. Further, pupils cannot put on concerts, plays or presentations for parents and other adults to see, although they are able to use a local secondary school. Learning resources are good; they are also good for literacy and numeracy and used well. The library is satisfactorily stocked and the books selected have been carefully chosen to give good quality support to learning in all subject areas.
- 53 This is a school which is continuing to raise standards. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Leadership and management are effective: the headteacher, Governing Body, staff and parents work closely together to pursue higher standards. The school has demonstrated a capacity for great improvement and is providing good opportunities for impressive levels of attainment. The school has average income per pupil but gives very good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

54 The school has made good progress over the past four years and standards have risen. However, the attainment of pupils in mathematics and science is not as high as that in English.

(1) Improve standards of attainment in mathematics and science by:

- continuing the planned improvements, including the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- improving the pace of learning of more able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2;
- increasing the challenge for more able pupils more quickly;
- planning how numeracy can be developed further in subjects, such as science, throughout the school.

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 8, 19, 21, 76, 79, 80, 82, 83, 86)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- (1) Extending opportunities for pupils to develop further their independent learning, especially through the use of the library and research using books in the classroom (Paragraphs 6, 15, 19, 20, 31, 69, 118).
- (2) Improving the quality of marking to the standard of the best in the school, so that comments relate to the subject content, as well as the standard of English, and give further guidance on how the work might be improved (Paragraphs 21, 79, 86, 118).
- (3) Provide greater detail in the written reports sent home to parents so that they have a clearer idea of what their children can and cannot do (Paragraph 41).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26.6	40.5	32.9	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	285
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	114

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	35

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	26	25	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	19
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	41	43	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (66)	84 (66)	76 (72)
	National	82 (80)	83 (79)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	16
	Girls	18	19	15
	Total	36	37	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (60)	73 (73)	61 (60)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21	20	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	16
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (78)	76 (58)	76 (74)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	29	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (55)	71 (48)	76 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	18
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	235
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.6
Average class size	31.7

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	441240
Total expenditure	432747
Expenditure per pupil	1508
Balance brought forward from previous year	17882
Balance carried forward to next year	26375

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	285
Number of questionnaires returned	72

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	31	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	31	4	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	46	11	6	1
The teaching is good.	67	31	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	43	10	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	24	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	22	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	40	10	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	74	22	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	31	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	39	14	7	13



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

- 55 The previous report indicated that insufficient emphasis was given to children's learning outcomes from the time they entered school and that activities were not challenging enough. The school has recently invested a lot of time and energy into developing the early years provision and made good progress since the last inspection in offering the children a broader range of challenging activities for part of the day. There are two intakes during the year. Children whose fifth birthday falls in the autumn term start school in September, while younger children start in the Reception class in January. At the time of the inspection twenty children were still under five. The admission arrangements are good. Positive links have been established with the parents through a programme of home visiting and visits for the children in school. This helps the children to settle well when they start school full-time. Children's level of attainment when they enter the school is below average. Good progress is made but their attainment is still below the expected standard by the time they are five in language and literacy, mathematics and some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, such as science. A large majority of children reaches the standard expected in their personal, social, creative and physical development.
- 56 The school has worked hard to provide a stimulating and well-organised environment for the children through its 'Plan, do and review' programme which takes place for part of the morning. This programme encompasses all recommended areas of learning that staff and parent volunteers help implement. There is a different focus each week which allows children to choose from ten structured play activities. These activities are designed to promote independence, increase confidence and develop gross motor skills. The programme is successful in achieving its aims. The team-work and organisation are most impressive. All adults take part in the planning and evaluation on a weekly basis, offering the children very good learning opportunities. It is during these sessions that good and often very good teaching takes place. There is good questioning and attention to language development; this has a positive impact upon the rate of children's learning. The work that takes place in this session has a significant impact upon children's learning in physical, creative and personal and social development. Although the activities are evaluated each week, no recording takes place of what the children actually learn. Day-to-day assessment systems have not yet been formalised. Initial, baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first few weeks in school. The information is used suitably to organise the children into groups and to set appropriate work, as in literacy and numeracy. There are very good links with the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator who offers very effective support to the Reception class, this ultimately helps the children settle well when they transfer to Year 1, as teachers are fully aware of the work that takes place and know the children.
- 57 Children's personal and social development is given a high priority to good effect. Teachers encourage the children to be independent and make choices about their activities during 'Plan, do and review' sessions. Children are responsive and interested, taking part in all the activities provided for them with enjoyment. They learn to evaluate their own work, which they do every day and decide whether they enjoyed the activity or not. They take turns and co-operate well when using the parachute, they listen carefully to instructions and carry out actions very sensibly. Even the youngest children work with concentration and persevere in their learning when the activities are stimulating. When they have been sitting on the carpet for too long, as in the literacy lessons, they become restless and lose concentration. All staff act as good role models for the children, helping them to form positive relationships with one another.
- 58 In language and literacy, the children are making at least sound progress, with some children making good progress. On entry to the Reception class, some children have limited language use and a restricted vocabulary. Speaking and listening skills are given high priority across all areas of learning. Imaginative role-play is carefully planned and is very effective in helping children to become confident in expressing themselves. Children learn to use appropriate language when playing in the shop. The children follow the National Literacy Strategy and are

beginning to understand how books are organised. They talk about the animals in 'Handa's Surprise' and by the time the majority are five years old, they know the role of the author and illustrator. They understand that words and pictures carry meaning and some recognise their own names. By the time they are five, the most able write recognisable letters to form simple words while the average child uses symbols to represent writing to convey meaning. Teaching is good and often very good throughout language activities in the 'Plan, do and review' activities. In particular all staff ask children suitable questions to help them develop language skills. Teaching in more formal literacy sessions is sound, but children are often kept on the carpet for too long and they become restless. Children who have recently started in the Reception class are not ready for the more formal National Literacy Strategy.

- 59 On entry to the Reception class, children's mathematical skills are below average. Provision for their development and awareness of mathematical language and skills within the 'Plan, do and review' sessions is good and they make good progress, but the majority still do not reach standards expected by the time they reach statutory school age. Through practical activities, such as colour and shape games, throwing a dice and jumping in and out of hoops with the appropriate number, shopping and sand and water, children extend successfully their mathematical vocabulary and understanding of mathematics. Teaching is at least satisfactory with good teaching observed during practical activities. Teachers use a range of opportunities, including role-play to promote awareness of numbers. The most able children order to ten and match appropriate objects to the numbers. The average child can order orally but has difficulty in recording numbers. Children enjoy number rhymes and songs, are beginning to know the actions to the songs but not the words yet.
- 60 Provision for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them is satisfactory and it is good for the development of skills in information technology. Children make good progress although, by the time they reach statutory school age, they still do not reach the standards expected. Children know the names of parts of the computer, the connection between the mouse and pointer and use of arrow keys; the teacher intervenes well to emphasise the correct mouse button to use. In one lesson, children sat for a considerable time looking at different sorts of fruit in connection with their literacy text of 'Handa's Surprise', but did not have sufficient opportunities to use their other senses to find out about the other qualities found in the good range of different fruit. Children understood that some plants grow from bulbs, but few children understood the concept of seeds. Good opportunities exist for children to become familiar with technology through construction games and toys, towers and imaginative structures are created successfully. Teaching is never less than sound and good overall.
- 61 By the age of five, almost all children reach the standards set out in the desirable outcomes for learning in physical development. Teaching is satisfactory with good features for less formal activities. Staff plan good opportunities to use scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes, and to use felt-tip pens and pencils for writing letters and numbers and making marks on boards and paper during 'Plan, do and review'. Children ride the wheeled vehicles confidently and have a good sense of space and awareness of others. During activities in 'Plan, do and review' children show good control on large apparatus and when balancing, turning and moving in different directions. During more formal physical education lessons, the amount of space children have to extend their movements, particularly during warm up times, is restricted by a great deal of large apparatus already set out. Also having the apparatus set out prior to the lesson does not allow the teacher to gradually introduce different equipment. The children are encouraged to work safely and be aware of others when working on the large apparatus.
- 62 Teaching is good in art, because an interesting range of activities is planned and resources are used effectively. It is satisfactory in music. Children make good progress, and by the time they are five, most children achieve the standards expected. They express themselves well in art and use different media and techniques. In their painting, children achieve good standards of control and brush work and use this effectively to make good paintings of animals for the Noah's Ark picture. Children enjoy singing action songs during the few minutes when waiting for lunch or between sessions. They concentrate less during more formal music lessons, when they are asked to repeat simple rhythms and tapping syllables of their names. They have good opportunities to experiment with instruments during 'Plan, do and review' sessions.

## ENGLISH

- 63 In 1999, when pupils left the school at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment recorded in the National Curriculum tests was above the national average. Seventy six per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above, which is around the national average, 37 per cent achieved the higher Level 5 and above, which is well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was well above the average.
- 64 The previous inspection report indicated that standards in English were generally below average, especially in Key Stage 1. Progress in Years 5 and 6 was particularly good in reading. The school has made good progress and standards have improved. The improvement over the last four years has been brought about by the school's determination to raise standards in literacy. These very good results were associated with a particularly able group of pupils, successful teaching, the 'Booster Classes' for particular pupils and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Many pupils with special educational needs, and for whom English is an additional language, also reached high standards in relation to their prior attainment.
- 65 In 1999, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 80 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above in reading and 84 per cent in writing. These results were similar to the national average. The number of children attaining the higher Level 3 was around the national average in reading and just below average in writing. Compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was around the average. The 1999 test results were above those of 1998 in both reading and writing. As in Key Stage 2, the school puts the gradual improvement down to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The school has collected and carefully analysed data for all year groups and individuals. Targets for the tests in 2000 at Key Stage 2 are lower than in 1999 and in 2001. They have been set slightly lower again in 2002. The school quite rightly takes into account the differences that occur from year to year in their detailed target setting, to reflect the differences in the ability levels of the pupils in different year groups.
- 66 Inspection findings show attainment in English to be close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1, and average at Key Stage 2, with a significant group of about one third of pupils reaching Level 5. Although standards are improving in Key Stage 1, there are still not sufficient pupils reaching Level 3 in writing. Progress throughout the school is good overall. Pupils leave the Reception class with below average attainment. Progress is good through Key Stage 1 and pupils just reach average standards for pupils reaching Level 2. The progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2, and by the time the pupils leave the school standards are mostly average or above. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with very good teaching, has helped to raise attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and pupils with English as an additional language very good progress by the time they reach upper Key Stage 2. This is due to the very effective support these pupils receive. The quality of teaching is often high. It is consistently good in Key Stage 1 and often very good in Key Stage 2.
- 67 Overall standards of attainment in speaking and listening are broadly in line with the national average throughout the school. However, the standards achieved and progress made in the development of listening skills are better than those in speaking skills, and are often good. Teachers offer the pupils good opportunities to acquire and practise their skills, particularly in literacy lessons and personal, social and health education. High expectations, particularly in Key Stage 2, and effective discipline in both key stages, ensure pupils listen attentively and build on each other's responses waiting for their turn to speak. Teachers have very good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and encourage pupils to use the correct terminology, not only in literacy but in other subjects as well. Particularly good examples were seen in science and music lessons.

- 68 By the end of Key Stage 1, reading is just in line with the national average, and a few pupils reach higher levels in attainment. Standards are rising and good progress is made through the key stage. Pupils are already benefiting from the introduction of the literacy hour and the increased focus on literacy throughout the school. Teachers organise the shared text sessions well and work effectively to maintain pupils' interest with a good range of texts. Pupils enjoy the 'shared text' sessions and work hard. Most pupils have a good understanding about the role of the author and illustrator, know the significance of the title page and the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Effective teaching strategies enable pupils to work independently with concentration when necessary; they also work effectively in groups. A good example was seen when Year 2 pupils organised themselves well and read a play together, they took turns and helped each other when necessary.
- 69 Progress in reading accelerates in Key Stage 2 and standards are at least average with about one third of pupils achieving higher levels. Teachers of older pupils motivate and inspire them with their enthusiasm for literacy. A particularly good lesson was seen when the teacher captivated the pupils' interest when reading and sharing Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Smugglers Song'. Very good quality questioning ensured the teacher elicited relevant responses from the pupils, which enabled her to check their understanding of the poem. From their reading of the poem they could discuss the sequence of events and analyse the poem and understand the mood it conveyed. Pupils in Year 3 could compare stories about princesses, that of the 'Paper Bag Princess' and the princess in 'Rumpelstiltskin', they use good expression to read the story, and describe the setting and characters with good detail. Reading with expression is encouraged when the pupils record themselves reading the story, they try to improve their techniques and record their attempts again, this is a good link using technology. Pupils access information in non-fiction books, and know the functions of the glossary, contents and index as in the lesson on fantasy linked to space. Opportunities for more demanding research skills and locating books in the library are limited. The school has plans to act on this issue within the next academic year as outlined in the school development plan. There is inconsistent practice in teachers recording the progress pupils make in reading, some of the best examples were in the younger classes, where detailed records are kept of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. At other times detail is lacking.
- 70 By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in writing is broadly in line with the national average for the number of pupils reaching Level 2. However, because few pupils reach the higher Level 3, overall attainment just reaches the average. Teachers offer their pupils a good range of work within literacy and across the curriculum. They encourage pupils to write in a variety of forms. For example, pupils write instructions, book reviews, labels and stories using appropriate language and format. They write clearly about their designs for puppets in Year 2, and when finished write a good evaluation of their work. In Year 1, pupils label their work correctly in science and draw and illustrate their route to and from school in geography. Teachers have high expectations of presentation, handwriting and use of punctuation, pupils respond appropriately and complete their work with care. Most pupils still print, but form their letters satisfactorily so that they can read back their own writing. Progress is good throughout the key stage.
- 71 Attainment in writing is average by the time the pupils leave the school, with about one third of pupils attaining higher levels. Progress improves for older pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. This is because the teachers at the end of Key Stage 2 are inspirational and challenge their children to 'have a go' and try their very best. Pupils respond positively and work hard. Older pupils have an understanding of the basic skills, but not all have the ability to use exciting and interesting language, particularly when writing stories. Teachers make good use of the writing workshops to develop skills in story writing and poetry. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct, with a satisfactory understanding of the use of paragraphs and parts of speech. Handwriting is usually neat, legible and consistent in size. These skills were successfully transferred to writing in religious education, when pupils wrote about Rama and Sita and in history when they wrote good descriptive writing about Elizabeth I and her life and times. Satisfactory use is made of homework to consolidate and extend skills learnt in lessons.

- 72 The subject is led by a highly motivated and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She is committed to raising achievement of literacy in the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and has helped the school in its bid to raise standards. The co-ordinator has good opportunities to monitor the impact of the literacy hour and is very aware of teaching and learning that is taking place in the school. Tests to monitor progress are in place and, with teachers' assessments, the school is in a very good position to set individual targets for every pupil. There is then very good tracking of pupils' progress to ensure targets are met.

### **English as an additional language**

- 73 The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is above that in most schools. They participate fully in the curriculum and have equally good access to the same curriculum as other pupils in the school. The majority of these pupils make good progress during Reception and Key Stage 1, which increases at the top of Key Stage 2 to very good progress. This is due partly to the value and respect the school places upon issues of culture and ethnicity, and the growing confidence of these older pupils as they are helped to develop personal and social awareness. The pupils also receive effective support and encouragement that helps them to work hard, persevere with activities and have confidence to discuss their work with their teacher and other adults. They work well within the whole class, in groups or individually. Their standards of achievement in the classroom and in National Curriculum tests are generally as good as their peers and at times better. In the 1999 tests in English, two pupils reached Level 5, two Level 4 and two Level 3. What the tracking from Key Stage 1 effectively showed, was that two pupils made progress that was in line with other pupils, but four of the group made significantly greater gains in their achievement. Analysis of data from Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, other formal tests, teacher assessment and predictions for the end of the key stage show that this pattern is similar in the other Key Stage 2 classes.
- 74 The headteacher, acting headteacher and all the staff are very supportive of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school effectively promotes good relationships with parents and has a very good knowledge of the pupils and their backgrounds. Good collection of performance data and tracking of pupils' progress by the English as an additional language teacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the senior management of the school ensure that the pupils are monitored carefully and to check that they continue to achieve good standards in their acquisition of English.

### **MATHEMATICS**

- 75 At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was broadly in line with the national average, and well above the average of similar schools. Standards in Year 6 are not quite as high this year as last, because there has been a rise in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Attainment, however, is still broadly in line with the national average. In the last inspection, standards were significantly below nationally expected levels, with only 38 per cent gaining the expected Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests. Since then this percentage has doubled. With all the other criticisms of mathematics in the last inspection having been tackled, and tackled well, there has been very good progress in the subject. Inspection evidence confirms that the improvement is being maintained.
- 76 In the National Curriculum tests in 1999, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average and the results of similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are still below the national average, having improved slightly from last year, largely because of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Attainment has been low at the end of Key Stage 1 because pupils enter the school with below average attainment, and have particular difficulty with technical mathematical vocabulary. The school is now concentrating on this area within the National Numeracy Strategy. Also, there has not been enough care taken to ensure that each pupil is adequately stretched, particularly in the more formal aspects of the subject. Consequently, although there has been some progress in Key Stage 1 mathematical attainment since it was criticised in the last inspection report, it is still not high enough.

- 77 In Key Stage 1, good use is made of mathematical games, motivating pupils and increasing enthusiasm. Number is given its due priority, though shape, space and measurement are not neglected, and there is some exploration into data handling in Year 2, with all pupils drawing bar charts manually, and using the computer to help. Most pupils on leaving Year 2 recognise and name shapes in two- and three-dimensions, measure accurately length in comparison with a 15 centimetre ruler, and add three one-digit numbers accurately. The lowest attaining pupils are still struggling with recording repeated addition as multiplication, and have little idea of tens and units. High attaining pupils explore simple sequences, which may include negative steps, with confidence. About one pupil in six is reaching Level 3 of the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are making satisfactory progress, and several are reaching Level 2, the nationally expected level for all pupils.
- 78 In Key Stage 2, the emphasis was on number in line with the National Numeracy Strategy focus. Little data handling was evident, but this is planned for during each term. Very good use is made of spreadsheets in Years 5 and 6 to calculate averages. On leaving the school, all pupils order numbers correctly up to a hundred thousand, work with fractions and decimals, and measure length to the nearest millimetre. Average attaining pupils are accurately dividing five figure decimals by integers, draw and measure angles correctly with a protractor, and understand straight line graphs. High attaining pupils use brackets correctly in complicated arithmetic expressions, understand and use negative co-ordinates, and investigate mazes and temperature line graphs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most reach Level 3 of the National Curriculum, and about half reach the nationally expected Level 4. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and attain standards similar to other pupils in their year group.
- 79 Teaching is good in both key stages. Due emphasis is placed on the teaching of mathematical English, supporting pupils' acquisition of literacy skills. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted, and most teachers are familiar with it, although one teacher needs further training. There are some other, minor, weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding in Key Stage 2, mainly in the precise usage of technical terms. Marking is conscientious, but variable in its effectiveness. Most teachers do not use marking as a record of progress and an opportunity to set short-term targets for individual pupils. Homework is used, but is not always planned into the lesson. Apart from these minor criticisms, learning is ensured by effective planning, emphasis on mental mathematics strategies, high expectations and good use of time and resources. Pupil management is particularly strong, with very good teacher-pupil relationships, and teachers using personality and humour to enthuse and motivate pupils into working very hard.
- 80 The management of mathematics is good, especially in monitoring, evaluating and improving performance. The school analyses the performance of all pupils over their years in school, tracking each pupil, selecting reasonable and challenging targets, predicting future success, and raising levels of achievement. For instance, by successfully choosing pupils for 'Booster Classes' in Key Stage 2 last year, 11 pupils in the 14 selected successfully raised their knowledge, understanding and skills to Level 4. Further improvements could be made by identifying individual pupil targets more sharply, and sharing these with parents for every pupil.

## SCIENCE

- 81 In 1999, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests was similar to the national average and above that of similar schools. Over 75 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above, a figure a little below the national average, and 34 per cent the higher Level 5, above the average. Analysis of the data of these pupils shows the very good progress they have made when it is compared with the teacher assessments made when they were in Year 2. Attainment in the National Curriculum tests has increased significantly since the previous inspection. There is little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Teacher assessments, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998, indicated that 61 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above, a very low figure, and 10 per cent attained the higher Level 3, a figure below the national average.

- 82 The previous inspection found that attainment was well below average in Key Stage 1 and was below average in Key Stage 2. The school has made good progress in science since then. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment has improved throughout the school; this improvement is especially evident by Year 6 and is associated with some outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 will not be quite as high as last year's pupils, especially in relation to higher attainment; this is associated with the particular characteristics of the group, evident during their time in the school and reflected in the school's targets for them. There are fewer more able pupils in the year group than last year. Attainment will, however, be about average. It is likely that results will improve again in 2001. Inspection evidence shows that attainment of Year 2 pupils is about average, although there is relatively little high attainment. Previous results, which indicated very low attainment, are not confirmed and reflect very cautious teacher assessments. In an effort to produce assessment data which more closely reflects the national picture, the school is about to start comparing levels of Year 2 science work with other schools.
- 83 During Key Stage 1 pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge and a sound range of skills. Pupils in Year 2 construct successfully simple electrical circuits, predict from basic circuit diagrams whether the bulb will light or not and then test whether their predictions are correct. They observe and describe the different properties of a range of materials well and know that a force can change the shape of some objects. Attainment in science, especially for average and lower attaining pupils, is restricted by the breadth of their vocabulary; a weakness evident when children enter Reception. Limited higher attainment is associated with more able pupils not being moved on to more demanding tasks sufficiently quickly. Pupils in Year 1 know that senses are used to aid accurate observation and deduction in science. They listen carefully to taped sounds and try to identify them. About a quarter appreciate that using more than one sense, such as looking at a range of pictures while listening to the sounds, is helpful in identifying the source of the sound. They sensibly investigate which materials would be best at keeping teddy dry, and conclude that plastic would be most effective. Pupils know that animals grow and that humans are 'all different'. The planning for, and support given to, pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, ensure that they extend their knowledge satisfactorily, although a limited vocabulary restricts especially the quality of their written records.
- 84 During early Key Stage 2, teachers build soundly on the good base achieved by Year 2; in the upper key stage there is a rapid improvement, which is linked to the particularly good teaching and interesting activities. Classes in Key Stage 2 are formed on the basis of prior attainment and age, and this helps teachers target their work more closely. This was well illustrated in the way in which the food and diet topic was delivered in the lower key stage. In the Year 3 class, pupils were helped to find out about the diets of different animals using a range of books and CD-ROM; they then grouped the animals according to their findings and were carefully led to the terms herbivore, carnivore and omnivore. In other classes in lower Key Stage 2, the focus was much more human diet and mathematical problems associated with planning a balanced diet. These pupils have investigated the effect of different insulators on the rate at which water cooled well, and produced good tables of results. They know that some materials conduct electricity and others do not. They summarise the life cycle of flowering plants well. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have a good understanding of the steps undertaken in planning, carrying out and recording the results of an investigation. They identify, correctly, potential safety hazards which could arise during their work, for example, the use of hot water when investigating the solubility of sugar. Their scientific knowledge expands rapidly through exciting teaching and good explanations. They know about the force of friction and that it can be helpful or a nuisance and they use a Newton meter correctly to measure forces during their investigations. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make particularly good progress because of the high quality support given to them. This was evident in the rapid development of appropriate scientific language demonstrated by a refugee from Kosovo.
- 85 Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their science. They are fascinated by the facts they are learning and particularly enjoy using books to find information, as in Year 3, or planning and carrying out practical exercises, as in Years 5 and 6. Their attitudes to science are very good; illustrated by the excitement and interest evident in almost all lessons, whether practical or

more teacher-led. Behaviour is also very good in both whole-class and group activities. The large majority of pupils, especially in upper Key Stage 2, are keen to answer questions, make suggestions and carry out investigations. From early in Key Stage 1 they are confident enough to explain their ideas. When working in groups, pupils do so sensibly and share resources very well. The high standards of behaviour and attitudes, coupled with very good relationships, are remarkable when the cramped conditions, that many Key Stage 2 pupils have to work in, are taken into account.

- 86 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is good overall. In Years 5 and 6 it is consistently very good. The good teaching helps to promote good learning by pupils, often because of the interest generated. The best teaching is exciting and reflects good subject knowledge, high expectations that are explained clearly to pupils and work suitable for the mixed age classes. Teachers' knowledge of science is generally sound to good, although occasional weaknesses occur in the first half of Key Stage 2, for instance, a lack of security when describing examples of different food groups and their use. The structure of classes helps teachers match work well to the needs of nearly all of the pupils. However, not enough attention is given to ensuring the needs of higher attaining pupils are fully met or that they are moved on to more challenging work quickly enough. Attention to this area, especially in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, would help to improve the learning of these pupils. The use of the special educational needs co-ordinator to teach the lower attaining pupils in Year 5 ensures that they receive the same curriculum as other Year 5 pupils. It also ensures that the work is matched very closely to their needs. Teachers throughout the school make particularly good use of pupils' literacy skills, and in Key Stage 2, numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily. Pupils are managed well and suitable resources usually readily available. Marking does not help pupils to understand how they can improve and, too often, comments relate only to spelling or punctuation, and ignore the scientific content. A notable exception is in the Year 3 class where marking is helpful, suggests how work can be improved and concentrates on the science.
- 87 The pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which helps to ensure a good balance between the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. This greatly assists pupils' learning. Science is often timetabled as a complete afternoon block; this is effective in upper Key Stage 2, but in other classes sometimes leads to a slower pace. Assessment is good, especially in Years 2, 5 and 6, and used effectively to focus teaching, and to inform the grouping of pupils and their individual targets. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, pupils are led through investigations so that they experience the excitement of finding out for themselves and they have to develop the social skills of working co-operatively and supporting each other. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and it is through her hard work, and the high quality teamwork of the staff, that such a significant improvement has been managed. Resources are satisfactory although limited for older and higher attaining pupils, in particular for ensuring accurate measurement, such as weighing. Accommodation, especially in Key Stage 2, is unsatisfactory. Classrooms are cramped and storage inadequate. The organisation of such good practical work in very difficult conditions is a credit to both staff and pupils.

## **ART**

- 88 By the end of both key stages pupils' rates of progress and the quality of learning are good. They produce good work in all areas of the art curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 produce detailed pictures of their home and their plans and drawings for their 'Dream Bedroom' won a local award. When painting three-dimensional models of houses they use a range of painting techniques well, including skilful use of rags to apply paint. From an early stage, pupils learn how to appreciate art: they write clear pieces to explain why they like particular colours and pictures and in doing so they enhance their literacy skills. Standards of observational drawing are good and pupils enjoy depicting scenes and creatures from nature, such as hedgehogs. Similarly, pupils start early to make thumb pots, before moving on to make life-like animal masks from cardboard.
- 89 Progress is maintained during Key Stage 2: pupils in Year 3 are adept at mixing paints to produce a range of shades and washes. Standards of three-dimensional work improve as a result of interesting assignments on Viking art, where pupils produce necklaces and other



artefacts. They fashion careful willow patterns on papier mâché plates and produce colourful work linked to studies on the Hindu festival of Holi. Observational work remains of a good standard, helped by stimulating teaching. Year 6 pupils have their own 'Gallery' in which are displayed some very good pastels of a range of bird studies linked to other curricular work. By the end of the key stage they produce good pictures of a range of buildings and also studies of Victorian people.

- 90 Pupils enjoy art and learn well. Their interest and concentration are very good. Pupils learn well because of a good scheme of work and good teaching in both key stages. For example, they are encouraged to appreciate art at all stages, so that a Year 6 pupil comments in their book 'the painting is so good that I think that I am on the pier'. In Year 3, pupils are invited to compare Leonardo da Vinci's self-portrait with that of Picasso's. In Year 5, when producing studies from nature, pupils are required to detect patterns and determine whether or not they are regular. The thoughtful scheme of work has effective links with a range of subjects, including literature, religious education, history and design and technology. As a result, pupils see connections in their learning and this improves standards. They regularly visit galleries, including those in Gillingham and London. Following one such visit, pupils returned and painted in the style of Sarah Wicks. The subject, therefore, makes a good contribution to spiritual and cultural development. Teachers are more confident since the earlier report and their knowledge helps pupils acquire better skills, knowledge and understanding. Careful and accurate planning, the good use of resources and the skilful management of pupils ensure that they concentrate and work well on their own. Pupils enjoy the subject and their positive attitudes contribute well to the quality of their learning.
- 91 There has been very good improvement since the earlier report and resources are used well. There is a committed and knowledgeable co-ordinator and the school is in a good position to sustain and build on its present good standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 92 The last inspection report judged that standards were below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and significantly below at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are now satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1, and good at the end of Key Stage 2, so improvements since the last inspection have been very good. The National Curriculum, then, was not being fully implemented. A good, balanced programme is now provided. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils design and make hand puppets satisfactorily, including simple sewing. They have considered the similarities and differences of wheeled vehicles, and made wheel and axle combinations with both fixed and free wheels. In the lower juniors they make bread, a wash bag with various fasteners, and models with cogs, showing that they understand the design process. In the upper juniors, a much more ambitious project on bread builds well on earlier work. Pupils are programming robots and using light sensors for switching, supporting development of information technology skills. They design and make high quality flags and banners, and are becoming competent at pop-up, lever, flap and rotate techniques in paper. The progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is good overall, and especially good in Key Stage 2.
- 93 Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection, high quality work was evident, in folders, around the school, and in the co-ordinator's photographs of work. It is judged, therefore, that teaching is good throughout the school. Activities are well planned and teachers ensure that pupils understand the design process and develop appropriate skills and learning. Literacy and numeracy are both supported well, in the development of technical vocabulary and measurement skills. Management of the subject is good. The last inspection report said that the co-ordinator was faced with an uphill struggle. She has struggled successfully and ensured that progress has been very good. The curriculum has been trimmed sensibly to take account of the less available time in the light of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and now concentrates on the development of essential skills. The co-ordinator monitors all planning. Pupils are assessed at the end of each year, though this assessment is not yet used consistently in planning the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory and used well, but the cramped accommodation hinders large projects in some classrooms.

## GEOGRAPHY

- 94 Standards of attainment, progress and the quality of learning are satisfactory in both stages. Pupils' achievement is appropriate in the important geographical areas and there are no areas of significant weakness. For example, in Year 1, pupils show a clear sense of place and direction when they plot their houses on a street map relative to the school and go on walks around the vicinity. They then move on to discuss environmental issues such as whether or not there is sufficient local parking. Teachers encourage an understanding of places further afield by asking families on holiday to take and photograph Barnaby the Bear, whose subsequent picture is then placed on a world map in the classroom. Good links with literacy development mean that when they study 'Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers' they look at maps of Scottish islands and talk about different kinds of transport.
- 95 At Key Stage 2, pupils understand about the importance of field work and observation by keeping a good weather diary: they record carefully, convert figures to graphs and look at data from the Internet to study the national and the world weather. When doing work in English, they produce good weather poems based on those such as 'Red Sky at Night'. As a result, geography makes a good contribution to the development of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Older pupils build on earlier work on place when they produce projects such as 'Where Are We?' when they place Chatham on regional and world maps. They understand aerial maps well. Pupils make particularly good progress and learn well where teaching is imaginative, as when Year 6 produce work of a high standard on Ladakh in Tibet. The teacher provides large photographs with a card surround showing Tibetans weaving, cooking and in the classroom. Pupils are required to pencil their answers on the card to the set questions. This stimulates interest and promotes learning well.
- 96 Overall teaching is satisfactory, but includes good as well as unsatisfactory areas. Teaching is similar in both key stages. Features of good lessons are effective planning linked to the development of clear, geographical objectives. Specific vocabulary, such as 'nomadic' is used as a matter of course and pupils are managed well. The main unsatisfactory feature of teaching is where simple objectives are not fully developed in the lesson and get lost in superfluous detail. This results in pupils not being sure of the important points.
- 97 The subject has improved since the last inspection: it now has a good scheme of work and is relatively well resourced. However, assessment arrangements need to be developed more fully. Geography benefits from effective leadership and is well placed to continue its improvement.

## HISTORY

- 98 The previous report indicated that standards were satisfactory in both key stages. The school has made good progress in maintaining standards, despite reduced time available, and is using history well to support the development of literacy. No history lessons were timetabled to coincide with this inspection and evidence is based on displays, scrutiny of work, talking to staff and pupils and a study of planning documents. Seven year olds make satisfactory progress and the quality of their learning is sound. They have a developing awareness of time passing by seeing how toys, such as teddies, change over time. This is helped by well chosen visits to the Toys museum. They learn to identify accurately the month of their birthday on a year calendar and, as they get older, they begin to recognise the passage of time in their own lives by preparation for special times such as Christmas, the Millennium and Easter. They gain a sound awareness of the seasons by studying the weather and the wearing of suitable clothes: for example, when looking at summer seaside holidays then and now. Almost all understand that famous people, like Florence Nightingale, lived before their grandparents and that they leave evidence of their own lives.
- 99 Pupils' progress and quality of learning are also satisfactory in Key Stage 2; however, some areas are stronger than others. A particular strength is pupils' knowledge and their ability to communicate ideas clearly. Thus, Year 6 pupils write long and persuasive pieces to show how the Shakespearean view of Richard the III may have been inaccurate. They know their Tudor kings and queens. Pupils use evidence well. The Internet is used to research Victorian

transport and census records are studied to re-create people's lives in the past. Pupils learn well as a result of some interesting assignments set by teachers: as well as depicting the Viking marauders from the position of the victims such as monks, they are encouraged to explain the point of view of the Vikings. Similarly, pupils give their own opinions on different types of historical entertainment and they compare their homes to a Roman Villa. Finally, by linking work in history to art and English successfully, teachers stimulate skills in literacy further as well as the quality of the pupils' learning. For example, when writing on myths and legends, pupils wrote well about the lives and appearance of medieval knights. An area for improvement is the development of a surer sense of chronology in the minds of the older pupils: whilst teachers build timelines into their planning, some Year 6 pupils remain a bit confused as to whether the Greeks came before the Romans and where the Tudors fit relative to the Victorians. On the basis of the limited evidence available, progress and learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, are satisfactory.

- 100 History makes a very good contribution to pupils' literacy development and is making a growing contribution to their understanding of information technology. It also makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by causing them to reflect on past events and to find out more about the past of their own and others' cultures. Pupils continue to go to interesting places, such as Fort Amherst and Rochester Castle. The capable and committed co-ordinator works hard to maintain good standards in the face of diminishing curricular time and is succeeding well.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 101 Standards are high in Key Stage 1, and very high in Key Stage 2. This is an enormous improvement since the last inspection, when standards were well below average in both key stages. Attainment now is above, or well above, that seen in most primary schools. On leaving Reception, pupils control a mouse competently and understand its connection to the pointer. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have successfully used a variety of programs in several areas of the curriculum. For instance, in mathematics, they have drawn bar charts, with teacher help. In geography they have used 'drag and drop' programs to piece together and label the countries of the British Isles. Increasing confidence and skill in word processing are enhancing literacy skills. By the end of the lower juniors, pupils are confidently using CD-ROMs to find information, for example, about musical instruments, and they are sending and receiving e-mails with attachments, which they can edit. They use a digital camera confidently, and edit their pictures to produce humorous effects, or to increase their knowledge and understanding of symmetry. These are skills which are still quite unusual in the adult population. By the end of the upper juniors, pupils are familiar with the use of scanners, and produce sophisticated documents using desk-top publishing. There are several examples of this in the school: a newspaper, published in colour, using columns and pictures; a selection of creative writing from Years 5 and 6; a novella, written by Year 3 pupils and illustrated with pictures drawn by the pupils and scanned into the published story. Upper juniors are confident in programming robots, and in using sophisticated adult spreadsheets, adding to their knowledge and understanding of data handling in mathematics. They use computers with understanding to monitor the environment through heat sensors. Pupils use programmable toys in the infants and lower juniors. Screen turtles are used in Years 4, 5 and 6 to enhance knowledge and understanding of shape and space in mathematics.
- 102 The school has its own web-site on the Internet, with each class having its own page. This was created by staff and the upper juniors with help from a local secondary school. Staff training is being carried out so that each class teacher can help the class keep the page up-to-date. Upper juniors have also produced, with staff help, an impressive and informative multi-media presentation about All Saints Church. The school's expertise, in what is the cutting edge of primary school curricular development, is being used by other local schools. This is a spectacular turnaround since the last inspection, and deserves recognition.
- 103 Teaching is good in all aspects in both key stages, with the exception of assessment, which is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who is doing an excellent job, has produced a comprehensive assessment scheme based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work which the school follows. This assessment scheme is based on the acquisition of key skills,

knowledge and understanding, and is very good. Information recorded in the new scheme is cumulative, so it can be passed from year to year with the pupil, and finally can be passed on to secondary school. However, this has only just been introduced, and will take some time to have an impact. Meanwhile, assessment is too teacher-dependent. Relationships with pupils, and consequent management of classes, are very good. Pupils enjoy working with computers and other information technology equipment, and this enthusiasm is used well by teachers. For instance, in Key Stage 2, pupils are particularly hard-working and enthusiastic, and teachers and support staff use this to produce the impressive work in desk-top publishing, data analysis, and the use of the Internet. The effects of the well planned improvement, good resources and teaching are that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress, learn well and show interest in the use of information technology.

- 104 The subject is managed very well. In order to provide the best for the pupils, money has been invested in a computer suite, and in training a technician to look after it. This is money well spent, in that it ensures that all parts of the information technology National Curriculum are covered very well, a key issue of the last inspection, while there is still a good quality computer in each classroom to service all the other subjects and enhance learning throughout the curriculum.

## MUSIC

- 105 The previous report suggested that standards were satisfactory. The school has made good progress, in particular it has maintained a broad curriculum and made greater use of music from a range of cultures. Only four lessons were observed during the inspection, three at Key Stage 1 and just one at Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was taken from assemblies, choir rehearsal and from teachers' planning. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, make satisfactory or, on occasions such as in singing, good progress in music as they perform, listen, compose and appraise. They make good progress in lessons that are structured to provide opportunities to practise and develop skills.
- 106 Effective teaching helps Key Stage 1 pupils to make good progress and reach appropriate standards by seven. Pupils listen attentively and make good progress as they build on their previous skills of using the percussion instruments and composing. Year 1 pupils successfully re-produced a pattern from words, such as butterfly and caterpillar, and other groups recognise the pattern when played. There was effective teaching which ensured that pupils concentrated on the activity and worked hard together to improve the standard of their performance. Other Year 1 pupils responded enthusiastically to a well-structured lesson that included all the elements in the music curriculum. They clapped in time with the music and also identified and named various instruments, for example, bells, tambourine and triangle. Very good teamwork between the class teacher and learning support assistant ensured pupils listened and performed well, while enjoying the rhythm of the music. The Year 2 teacher skilfully promoted literacy skills through the music lesson as well as developing the cultural dimension of music well. Pupils listened carefully to African music and, with sensitive questioning from the teacher, responded and discussed their feelings of joy and sadness with clarity and a respect for music from another culture.
- 107 In the one lesson observed at Key Stage 2, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm motivated Year 5 and 6 pupils, many who have special educational needs, to make good progress and thoroughly enjoy their music lesson. The teacher effectively moved the lesson on, consolidating previous learning and extending and developing new skills. High expectations, praise and encouragement from the teacher ensured pupils not only enjoyed singing 'Bugsy Malone' but were keen to improve their performance. This they did, while learning a new skill, the art of scatting. They improvised and created the backing for the song with great attention to the rhythm.
- 108 The school continues to perform and excel in singing in local music festivals. Music makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and social life of the school, and now also to pupils' cultural development. There are good opportunities for pupils to hear a range of music in assembly and class lessons from Western and other cultures, both traditional and modern. The

good expertise of the music co-ordinator and a few other teachers, along with a good scheme of work, help pupils make good progress whilst developing their enjoyment and interest in music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 109 The previous report indicated that standards were satisfactory in the areas observed. The school has done well to maintain this position despite unsatisfactory accommodation and limited time available. The standards of attainment, progress and the quality of learning of the pupils are just satisfactory. This is the result of a hall which is too small for class physical education, the absence of a field and a small playground. The limited progress and learning are not linked to weak teaching, which is mainly good. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe lessons in the hall in gymnastics and dance.
- 110 At Key Stage 1, pupils complete a range of jumps and turns using height and width to good effect. They control their landing competently and most create a series of linked movements well. Pupils listen carefully to music and many show imaginative responses, as when a Year 2 class followed a beat and used different parts of their body satisfactorily. These foundations are built on effectively at Key Stage 2. Here the knowledge and effectiveness of the teachers ensure good quality learning. For example, Year 3 pupils turn, jump and balance well, on the floor and the apparatus, before they develop a longer sequence of movements involving the apparatus. Progress and the quality of learning are satisfactory in dance; however, shortage of space prevents more ambitious work. Most pupils show some imaginative responses to the wind dance and work well in pairs; other Year 3 pupils show a good ability to follow instructions in a more formal country dancing lesson. Limited evidence was seen of games skills but in one lesson most pupils could dribble satisfactory using a hockey stick.
- 111 Evidence from planning and records shows that most pupils can swim 25 metres unaided, and some more than this. There are very few non-swimmers. The school works hard to see that pupils get to a swimming pool: teachers walk them a mile and dismiss them from the pool after the end of normal lessons. The school is handicapped further by having to share their pool space with the general public.
- 112 Pupils enjoy physical education and concentrate well; they walk quietly into the hall, find space without fuss and work sensibly. All of them have an awareness of the safety of others in a confined space and this contributes to the quality of learning. Pupils show good attitudes and team spirit.
- 113 The teaching of physical education is good in both key stages. Features of good teaching which play an important part in helping the quality of learning are a good level of expertise and clear instruction. Lessons were seen in both key stages where careful teaching to improve specific skills was matched to an accurate assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers also made effective use of demonstration by pupils. Another strength was the thoughtful asking of open-ended questions which encouraged pupils to evaluate the performance of themselves and others. The management of pupils is good.
- 114 Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development. In particular, they work well co-operatively. The curriculum is as broad as possible in the circumstances but currently there is insufficient detail about particular lessons to support teachers who may need some help. Extra-curricular provision is limited to mainly football and 'kwik' cricket. Despite the best efforts of the staff, the shortage of suitable indoor and outdoor spaces makes it difficult to judge, with any confidence, that the subject can improve much beyond its present position.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 115 The previous inspection indicated that attainment at the end of both key stages was similar to that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There has been an improvement and, by the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above that expected. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have a good understanding of many features of Christianity and a wide

range of knowledge about other world faiths. They appreciate that praying is 'communication with God' and are aware of the links between Judaism, Jesus and Christianity. They know about some of the main features, festivals and stories associated with Islam and Sikhism. For instance, pupils know about the importance of the teachings of Guru Nanek for Sikhs. Their knowledge of Hinduism is good. They know that the festival of Holi celebrates the triumph of good over evil and that Divali, the 'Festival of Light', relates to the story of Rama and Sita who were lost in the darkness. The clarity of pupils' understanding is helped by clear teaching and good use of resources. In discussions of these festivals, pupils appreciate the symbolism associated with light and candles in many faiths, including, for instance, in Advent and Jesus as 'The Light of the World'. Pupils also reflect on wider aspects of religious belief and meaning. They are aware that there are many similarities between faiths, such as the belief in a 'Supreme God', a theme developed especially well by the teacher in a Year 5 and 6 class. Much of the work in Key Stage 1 is through discussion and less work is recorded than in Key Stage 2. However, by the end of Year 2, pupils know about stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They discuss light and its importance at Christmas and in the Christingle service. They know about the main features of festivals of a range of faiths, including Divali and Holi. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding reflect the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

- 116 Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In Key Stage 1, well organised discussions help these pupils contribute to lessons and aids their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress, because of effective support and good use of questions. Teachers sensitively use the experiences of pupils in the school who are from different ethnic backgrounds and beliefs.
- 117 Pupils' very good attitudes in religious education lessons aid their learning. Pupils are generally keen and answer questions enthusiastically. In Key Stage 1, pupils listened carefully to the teachers when reading and expanding on a story associated with the festival of Holi. In Years 5 and 6, high quality discussion followed the telling of the story with more detail. Their interest helped them discuss the use of candles and light in other religious festivals with which they were familiar. Behaviour is very good; pupils are attentive, listen well to each other and wait to answer questions.
- 118 Teaching of religious education is good, an improvement over the last inspection when it appears to have been satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is good; it is aided by the clear lesson plans and resources provided by the co-ordinator. In the best lessons, in the Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher's enthusiasm, clear delivery and clarity of explanations are especially effective in promoting learning. In most lessons, learning is promoted because teachers move pupils on quickly to thinking about the meaning of the story they have heard. A weakness evident in some lessons, in Key Stage 2 in particular, is that not enough use is made of pupils' ability to search for information for themselves in books they have been given. Marking rarely helps pupils to consider how they can improve their work. Good use has been made of information technology to help pupils produce a program illustrating the main features of the All Saints Church.
- 119 The headteacher is co-ordinator for the subject; and in his absence the role is being taken on by the deputy headteacher. The subject has been well led and a clear programme developed. The curriculum gradually introduces more difficult concepts associated with religious thought as pupils grow older, often using the same topic theme. One of the major strengths of the school's religious education programme is its very inclusive nature; all major world faiths are studied in adequate depth to enable pupils to appreciate the beliefs of others. The further development of the curriculum and assessment have been restricted until the new Medway Locally Agreed Syllabus has been produced. Assemblies help pupils extend their religious knowledge and the personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' understanding of how religious beliefs can influence one's life well. Religious education is also developed effectively through literacy. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils reflect on the meaning of stories from the Bible and other religions. Personal feelings are explored and moral aspects of religious education topics are discussed. The study of major world faiths introduces pupils to different cultures and helps them understand important features of modern British society.