

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LAWN COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northfleet

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118264

Acting Headteacher: Mrs C Folena

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Boden  
12301

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Inspection number: 191833

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Northfleet Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Selwyn Dennis
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Boden	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Design and technology Under fives	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs E Parrish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs L Bradley	Team inspector	English Religious education History Geography English as an additional language	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr P Ollis	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is smaller than average with 129 pupils on roll including the 28 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The majority of pupils are from white European backgrounds. Most live on a nearby council estate of multi-storey flats. The school population is transient, with many pupils joining or leaving at times other than the normal ones for admission and transfer to secondary education. This reflects the mobility of the local population. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. A significant number of the pupils on the register of special educational needs have behavioural difficulties. Children enter the nursery with poor speaking and listening skills, and poor social skills. Three pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a higher proportion than is found in most schools.

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

This is a very ineffective school that gives very poor value for money. All the good work done in the nursery is undone in the reception and Year 1 class. Although the attainment of children entering the nursery is below average, they are well on the way to achieving the desirable learning outcomes in all the areas of learning, except language and literacy, by the time they move to the reception class. Here, learning stops and they are well below children of the same age nationally when they start statutory schooling in Year 1. Once they leave the security of the nursery, they are faced with very poor teaching and a very poor curriculum that is devoid of breadth, balance and relevance. This is a major factor in the behavioural difficulties that many of the children have. The leadership of the school is very poor. No effective steps have been taken to address the very serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report.

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

- The quality of teaching and the overall provision in the nursery ensure that children get off to a really good start.

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

- The quality of leadership and management, including the financial management of the school and the provision of resources, is very poor. This results in very poor teaching and learning, and very low standards in all subjects.
- The quality of the curriculum for all groups of pupils is very poor. It lacks breadth, balance and relevance and does not meet statutory requirements in information technology and religious education.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their personal development is poor.
- Pupils' poor attitudes and behaviour, and their poor personal development and attendance have a very negative impact on their learning.
- The monitoring and support provided for pupils' academic performance, safety and welfare are poor.
- Parents are not satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Partnership with parents is poor. This is having a negative impact on children's learning.

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

**In accordance with section 13(2) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.**

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

When the school was inspected in 1997, it was judged to have serious weaknesses and provided unsatisfactory value for money. Since then, the quality of teaching and learning, and standards in all subjects have declined significantly. The school is moving backwards. There is no love of learning and pupils and parents are being short-changed. There has been very poor progress in addressing the many weaknesses identified in the previous report.

## 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	E*	E*	E*	E*
mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E*
science	E*	E*	E*	E*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table shows that standards have been consistently very low for the past three years. The performance of pupils, at the end of Key Stage 2, has remained in the lowest five per cent, both nationally and in comparison with the performance of pupils in similar schools. The school did not achieve its targets in English and mathematics in 1999 and there is no possibility that they will achieve the unrealistic targets set for this year. During the inspection, the standards of work seen in almost all subjects were very low. The exceptions were art and physical education, but even in these, standards were still low. The very low standards in literacy and numeracy put pupils at a major disadvantage when learning in other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children in the nursery have very good attitudes. They enjoy being there and develop a love of learning. In the rest of the school, attitudes are poor. The pupils are disinterested and unenthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In the nursery, behaviour is very good. In the rest of the school, behaviour is poor and frequently interrupts learning.
Personal development and relationships	In the nursery, children develop very good social skills and form constructive relationships. In the rest of the school, personal development is poor. Incidents of unsatisfactory relationships were witnessed every day, including oppressive name-calling and insulting remarks. Several fights were seen during lessons. A significant number of pupils show little respect for the feelings of others.
Attendance	Poor. Despite the fact that parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their children enjoy school, observations and discussions with pupils show that many, from the reception class upwards, do not. They often find lessons boring and this leads to a lack of interest and disaffection by many.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

The quality of teaching of children under five is highly variable. In the nursery and in a music lesson taught to reception children by a visiting teacher, the teaching was very good and this led to very good learning. The nursery teachers have an excellent understanding of the developmental needs of very young children. Their commitment makes the job-share very successful. They and the support staff work very well together to provide a very good range of learning experiences to move children on. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very poor. This means that the very good learning in the nursery is quickly undone. Apart from the music lesson mentioned earlier, all the teaching in the lessons seen was poor or very poor.

In both key stages, the quality of teaching is very poor. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching in 75 per cent of the lessons seen was less than satisfactory. Forty-two per cent of lessons were poor and 25 per cent were very poor. A support teacher taught the only good lesson. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory in 85 per cent of lessons. Sixty-two per cent of lessons were poor and 15 per cent were very poor. One lesson was good because of the good planning of a visit to the National Gallery and the effective input of gallery staff. The quality of teaching is equally poor across all subjects including literacy and numeracy. This means that pupils' learning in all subjects is very poor. Their lack of literacy and numeracy skills is having a negative impact on their learning throughout the curriculum.

The teachers' very low expectations and poor subject knowledge lead to very poor planning. They do not match work to the needs of the pupils. This contributes to the very poor learning by all groups of pupils. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged and lower attaining pupils do not understand what is going on for much of the time. All the pupils become bored and frustrated. They 'switch off' and make their own amusement, frequently fighting or leaving the classroom.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the nursery is very good. The curriculum in the reception class and both key stages is very poor. It lacks breadth, balance and relevance. Many subjects are not taught in sufficient depth because not enough time is spent teaching them. The information technology curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The requirements of the Kent agreed syllabus for religious education are not met. The school does not have effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils do not have equality of access and opportunity. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is poor.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made in the nursery. In the reception class and in both key stages, provision is poor. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is not modified to reflect their individual educational plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory overall. Although they receive effective support and make good progress in learning when a specialist teaches them in small groups, teachers do not plan for their specific needs in class lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision in the nursery is very good. In the rest of the school it is poor in all aspects. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to participate in teams and clubs. They do not develop an awareness of life in a multi-racial society and they have very few opportunities to show initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	In the nursery, the children are cared for very well. The teachers know the children very well and plan suitable work for them. In the rest of the school, the monitoring and support provided for pupils' academic performance and welfare are poor. The teachers do not always ensure that the pupils work in a safe environment and some teachers are unaware of the medical conditions of their pupils. Not all staff have had child protection training. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are unsatisfactory.

Parents are not satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Partnership with parents is poor. This is having a negative impact on their children's learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent in the nursery. Very poor in the rest of the school. The acting headteacher does not provide clear educational direction. Curriculum coordinators have little idea of what is going on in their subjects throughout the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very poor. As a result, the very poor teaching continues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' effectiveness in running the school is very poor. They have failed to meet their statutory duties in ensuring that the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all its pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very poor. There are no effective systems for evaluating the impact of earmarked grants. Although test results are analysed, the information gained is not used effectively to plan initiatives that will lead to improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very poor. The school development plan is a very poor document that lacks detail. The school cannot account for the way in which earmarked grants have been spent. Monies for special educational needs are not fully used for their specific purpose.

The school has great difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers. There is a constant turnover of staff, usually from supply agencies. These teachers are not always appropriately trained in teaching the National Curriculum or literacy and numeracy. Their poor subject knowledge, the lack of effective induction procedures and the fact that they do not stay long enough to get to know the pupils, are major factors in the pupils' very poor learning. The accommodation is generally adequate to allow all subjects to be taught effectively. There is a significant lack of resources in most subjects. This is another factor in the very poor learning.

Leadership and management are very poor in all aspects. This results in very poor teaching and learning and very low standards. The only bright spot is in the nursery, where the excellent leadership and management ensure that children get off to a really good start. However, the nursery is seen as a separate entity and opportunities have been missed to spread the excellent practice there to the rest of the school. The governors are not effective in running the school or planning for improvements and future developments. There are no procedures in place for ensuring that the school receives the best value for its spending.

## 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>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad behaviour disrupts lessons.</li> <li>• Supply teachers do not know the children well enough, including important medical details.</li> <li>• They would like to be more involved with their children's learning.</li> <li>• They would like more information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Levels of homework are inconsistent.</li> <li>• They would like more extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspectors support the parents' views that the staff are approachable and ready to listen to questions or problems. However, they do not support the rest of the positive views expressed. They support fully the negative responses.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below those expected in most subjects. Since then there has been a significant and serious decline in pupils' learning. Standards are low or very low in all subjects.
2. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment. They have particularly poor language and social skills. The vibrant atmosphere and the very good teaching in the nursery promote very good learning and, by the time they enter the reception class, they are on target to achieve the desirable learning outcomes in all the areas of learning except language and literacy, which although much improved, is still a weakness. When they enter the reception class, learning for the majority stops. Moreover, the very good learning that has taken place in the nursery is quickly undone by the very poor teaching and the impoverished curriculum that does not take account of the developmental needs of young children. This marks the beginning of a downward spiral in learning.
3. In Key Stage 1, the National Curriculum tests and assessments show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have remained consistently well below the national average since 1996. Although there was a very slight improvement in 1998, the results for 1999 show a decline since then. In reading, standards are well below the national average and below the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. In writing, the pupils achieve well below both the national average and the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. In mathematics, they are in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally and achieve well below the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. No pupils achieved above the expected level 2. The evidence of the inspection is that, because of the very poor teaching, pupils do not learn enough and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very low. The small numbers of boys and girls make gender comparisons unreliable. In science, teacher assessments show that the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level 2 is below the national average. No pupils achieved the higher level 3 in 1999. The evidence of the inspection is that the assessments are over-generous. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic science is very poor.
4. In Key Stage 2, since 1996, the results of the National Curriculum tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science have been in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally and in similar schools. In 1999, only one out of 16 pupils achieved the expected level 4 in English, and just three achieved level 4 in mathematics. The evidence of the inspection confirms these very poor results. Effective learning does not take place and standards are indeed very low in English, mathematics and science. This is due to the very poor teaching which creates a very poor climate for learning because pupils are often out of control. The school blames the poor results on the mobility of the school population. This is simply not true. An analysis of the results achieved by pupils who had attended the school since the reception class and those who had joined the school in the two years prior to the tests shows that the one boy who achieved a level 4 was a newcomer.
5. Literacy and numeracy are particularly weak because teachers do not know how to teach them and the pupils are not given enough opportunities across the curriculum to develop their skills. In view of the very poor past performance, the school has set totally unrealistic targets that they have no hope of achieving. In English, the prediction is that the number of pupils achieving level 4 will increase from six per cent to 50 per cent and in mathematics the increase will be from 25 per cent

to 61 per cent. With the poorly planned curriculum, very poor teaching, poor assessment procedures and ineffective booster classes, the school is in no position to achieve these targets.

6. Throughout the school, pupils read slowly and with little expression. Standards in writing are very poor. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' poor literacy skills are reflected in the immature stories they write. Their use of punctuation is poor and the vocabulary they use lacks variety and interest. In mathematics, pupils have very poor mental strategies and a poor understanding of the four rules of number. This means that they do not have the basic skills necessary to solve problems. They have very little science knowledge and understanding. The very low expectations of teachers, and the consequent lack of challenge mean that, by the end of Year 6, the level of understanding of the highest attaining pupils is what would be expected of average attaining pupils in Year 2.
7. In information technology, the pupils have been deprived of their entitlement for the past year and standards are very low throughout the school. In recent years, they have not had regular opportunities to use computers because the old machines were frequently broken. From last September until just two weeks before the inspection, the school had only one computer. Now there is one in every classroom but the teachers are not making the best use of them. During the inspection, they were only observed to be in use in the Year 5 and 6 class. Discussion with the oldest pupils revealed that most of their work involves copy-typing of previous work. They are beginning to combine text and graphics but they still need a lot of support.
8. In religious education, standards are very low throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, there was no written work in the pupils' books and the pupils had very little recall of what they had learned. In Key Stage 2, the pupils have a very limited knowledge of the purpose of prayer.
9. Standards in art and physical education are well below those expected of pupils the same age. By the age of eleven, the pupils' drawings are immature because they have not been taught any skills. Significant factors in the poor learning are the poor resources and the limited time given to the subject. In physical education, the pupils do not develop satisfactory co-ordination skills and spatial awareness.
10. Standards in design and technology, geography, history and music are very low compared with those expected of pupils the same age. This is because the school does not give these subjects a sufficiently high status. Since September, there have not been co-ordinators for geography and history. There has been no co-ordinator for design and technology for the past three years. It is obvious that these subjects have been neglected to such an extent that standards could not be much lower. There was no past work available for design and technology and the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 had to be told what the subject meant. They have a poor knowledge and understanding of history overall. They can place the Greeks, Romans, Tudors, Stuarts and Victorians into the correct time sequence, but they do not have a well-developed sense of chronology. They muddle one period with another, for example, asserting that the Victorians threw rubbish out of their windows.
11. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make poor gains in learning. Higher attaining pupils make very poor gains because they are capable of so much more. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support that enables them to make good gains in learning when they are withdrawn from class. However, when they are in class, the lack of specific planning and support lead to the same poor learning as the rest of the pupils.

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

12. Children settle very quickly into life in the nursery. The very good teaching and the supportive environment develop in them a love of learning. It is very evident that they enjoy being there. Their behaviour is very good because they know that good behaviour is rewarded by exciting activities. The quiet insistence of the teachers on courtesy and good manners means that they build their social skills very well and learn to co-operate and take turns. They care about each other's

welfare. This was shown when a little girl fell asleep during story time and was placed on cushions on the floor. In the activity time that followed, the rest of the children took care not to wake her and deliberately left a space around her. Nobody mentioned it. It was just the normal thing to do.

13. Despite the fact that parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their children enjoy school, observations and discussions with pupils show that many, from the reception class upwards, do not. They often find lessons boring and this leads to a lack of interest and disaffection by many. Attendance is poor. Pupils who belong to the football club and the art and craft club, both of which are run entirely by parents, clearly enjoy these activities. Most pupils enjoyed their visit to the National Gallery, which took place during the inspection, but lost interest afterwards when related activities in class lacked challenge and meaning. In general, from the reception and Year 1 class upwards, pupils respond badly to both teachers and other adults, and this is in marked contrast to the situation in the nursery.
14. Due to the very low expectations and the very poor quality of teaching, pupils' attitudes to school are poor generally. Standards of behaviour in the reception and Year 1 class and in the Year 5 and 6 class are very poor overall, and this is preventing pupils from learning. Standards of behaviour around the school are also generally poor. Incidents of unsatisfactory relationships were witnessed every day, including oppressive name calling and insulting remarks, and several fights were seen during lessons. Pupils have an unsatisfactory understanding of the impact of their actions on others. A significant number show little respect for the feelings of their fellow pupils. Not only are pupils not always polite and courteous among themselves, they are also not always well mannered towards visitors. One pupil has been excluded permanently in the past year. The current approach towards maintaining discipline, which often lacks respect, is not helping to improve the situation. The discourteous way that some staff treat the pupils does not set a good example.
15. Pupils' personal responsibility and initiative are poor. Although the recently appointed acting headteacher has brought forward important changes, for example, the introduction of a prefect system, these are not effective. Personal development in classes is very poor because pupils are not given any opportunities to exercise initiative and independence. They do not have any opportunities in lessons to evaluate how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve.
16. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are worse now generally than they were at the time of the previous inspection. These aspects of school life are moving backwards, and this is having a very negative impact on learning.

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

17. The last inspection report indicated that teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in thirty-six per cent of lessons and that this was having a negative impact on pupils' learning. The quality of teaching has deteriorated significantly and pupils are learning even less now than they were then.
18. The quality of teaching in the nursery and by a visiting teacher to the reception class is very good. It promotes enthusiasm, involvement and very good learning. The teachers in the nursery have very good subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the developmental needs of young children. They communicate their high expectations of work and behaviour in a caring way and plan a very good range of learning experiences with clear learning objectives for each child. They assess the children's learning constantly in order to plan the next steps for them. This was seen in an activity session when different children visited the same activity, but the teacher had prepared different questions for each of them. The children settle very well and enjoy what they do because, although they are challenged, the work is matched well to their needs. They work hard, not only to please their teachers but also because they want to learn.
19. In the reception class and both key stages, the quality of teaching is very poor. This is even worse than at the time of the last inspection. All the teaching seen in the reception class was poor or very poor, except for one music lesson taught by a visiting teacher. This lesson showed to good effect what these pupils are capable of when they are challenged to concentrate and work hard, and when

- the teacher has a very good understanding of how pupils of this age learn. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching in 75 per cent of the lessons seen was less than satisfactory. It was poor in forty-two per cent and very poor in 25 per cent. A support teacher taught the only good lesson. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory in 85 per cent of lessons. Sixty-two per cent of lessons were poor and 15 per cent were very poor. One lesson was good because of the good planning of a visit to the National Gallery and the effective input from gallery staff.
20. The quality of teaching is equally poor across all subjects, including literacy and numeracy. This means that pupils' learning in all subjects is very poor. Their lack of literacy and numeracy skills is having a negative impact on learning throughout the curriculum. Apart from in the nursery, the teachers have very low expectations and poor subject knowledge. This poor subject knowledge leads them to rely heavily on published schemes. However, they do not know enough about the schemes to question whether some of the suggested activities are appropriate for their pupils. The activities they plan are not worthwhile learning experiences. They never ask themselves the questions, 'Why am I doing this?' 'What will the pupils learn?' Teachers always teach whole class lessons. This is unacceptable, particularly in mixed age classes. They do not even attempt to match work to the needs of pupils. This contributes to the very poor learning by all groups of pupils. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged and lower attaining pupils do not understand what is going on for much of the time. All the pupils become bored and frustrated. They 'switch off' and make their own amusement, frequently fighting or leaving the classroom.
21. The teachers make poor use of support assistants. They are often used to 'police' the classes in an attempt to suppress the poor behaviour. Relationships between pupils and adults are unsatisfactory and pupil management is poor. Teachers ignore poor behaviour and are often oblivious to the fact that the pupils are not listening to them. This was the case in a Key Stage 2 science lesson when the pupils effectively downed tools because they were so bored. The lack of enthusiasm by the teachers is conveyed to the pupils who, in return, show very little respect for teachers. The pupils show little enthusiasm for their work and lack concentration and attention because much of what they are asked to do is pointless. They do not show any initiative because they are not encouraged to contribute.
22. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very poor. It is often inaccurate and does not give any indication to pupils of how they can improve. All the teachers do not use homework consistently. This was a concern expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in response to the questionnaire.

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

23. Since the last inspection, the quality and range of curricular opportunities has diminished and the school has done far too little to address the identified weaknesses in curriculum planning. The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has deteriorated significantly.
24. The school offers a very poor curriculum, which lacks breadth, balance and relevance at both key stages. The quality and range of learning opportunities are severely limited and pupils are short-changed as a direct consequence. Too little time is spent on non-core subjects and pupils cannot be said to have worthwhile experiences over either key stage in any subject. There is a heavy emphasis on teaching facts with minimal thought given to enabling pupils to develop and apply skills, most significantly in literacy and numeracy, but also in every other subject area. The curriculum is devoid of relevance, which is a key factor in pupils' increasing disaffection as they move through the school. Teachers' poor understanding of the National Curriculum leads to a severe mismatch in what is taught to pupils of primary age with, for instance, concepts more suitable for Key Stage 3 pupils, such as erosion, being 'taught' to pupils in Year 3. The extreme lack of appropriate artefacts, equipment and materials further diminishes the opportunities to make the curriculum relevant. Where teachers do build visits into the curriculum, they do not prepare pupils well enough beforehand and fail to capitalise on the enthusiasm generated.

25. The one outstanding exception to this bleak picture is the very good curriculum provided for the intellectual, physical, creative and personal development for children under five in the nursery, which gets them off to such a good start. This benefit drains away as soon as they start in the reception class, which caters mainly for children under five but includes six pupils in Year 1. The curriculum takes insufficient account of the developmental needs of young children and promotes very poor behaviour and very poor learning as a result.
26. The school does not meet statutory requirements in information technology where until very recently poor provision did not enable the curriculum to be taught. Even now, the lack of equipment for control and monitoring means that these aspects are omitted. It also fails to meet the requirements of the Kent agreed syllabus in religious education, which is not given sufficient status as a core subject. Insufficient time is allocated to the subject and it is not taught on a regular basis. Provision for health and sex education is satisfactory.
27. The absence of a curriculum route map for the whole school means that teachers have no idea where pupils have come from and no idea where they are going. They are totally oblivious of how the work they plan for their class fits into a grand plan. This results in chasms in pupils' learning and duplication of the same topics. The nationally recommended guidance has been adopted without any adaptation, and is not cross-referenced to the National Curriculum. There is no progressive teaching of skills because teachers do not identify in their planning which skills they intend pupils to learn.
28. The organisation of time is a critical factor for the school because the time available is sometimes frittered away. The school has no coherent policy about the use of time and teachers make unilateral decisions about the organisation of their timetables. An extreme example of time wastage was found in the Year 1 and 2 class where a half-hour each day was allocated to personal and social development. This amounted to two and a half hours each week where it was intended that pupils would learn to share by playing 'tabletop' games. This was neither effective nor the most appropriate way to promote pupils' learning.
29. The school does not have effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers have a poor understanding of the principles that underpin the literacy and numeracy strategies, and fail to identify ways in which pupils can apply their skills across the curriculum. For example, there is almost no opportunity for pupils to write at length for a specific purpose in science, history, geography or religious education. The exception to this was the healthy eating leaflet produced by pupils in Years 5 and 6 as part of their science topic. Equally serious is the lack of planning for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, which greatly hampers their ability to think logically and creatively. Opportunities are constantly missed for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in subjects such as science, geography, and design and technology.
30. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is poor at both key stages. Individual educational plans are of unsatisfactory quality at Key Stage, 1 since they are usually too generalised to form a secure basis for planning remedial programmes. They are generally satisfactory at Key Stage 2. At neither key stage, however, is the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs modified to reflect their individual educational plans, and they receive the same curriculum as all the other pupils. The curriculum for pupils who speak English as an additional language is unsatisfactory overall because although their specific support lessons are based appropriately on different subjects, when they are in class, they also receive the same curriculum as all other pupils.
31. The school is not successful in providing equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. Although additional support is provided to pupils with special educational needs, this is often at the expense of other subjects. During the inspection, these groups were observed to be taught always by learning support assistants during group activities and never by teachers. These groups do not get an equal call on the teachers' time. In the Year 1 and 2 class, they were frequently taught in the library away from their peers and the teacher was not seen to check their work. This was a concern raised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting.

32. The way that the school manages the additional literacy support promotes constant disruption of lessons such as science and physical education because pupils are withdrawn for short sessions and consequently often miss a vital part of the lesson. Higher-attaining pupils make even less progress in learning than average and below average pupils because planning does not take account of their needs and there is no challenge in the activities they are expected to do.
33. There is a narrow range of extra-curricular activities. This is something that the parents would like to see improved. No member of staff is involved in running any clubs, either at lunchtime or after school. Those activities that do take place do so because of the dedication and hard work of a small number of parents and a governor. Very few visits have taken place until recently and the pupils do not have any opportunity to participate in residential experiences.
34. The community is involved less than is usual for a primary school. Where there are links, these have usually come about through parental and governor initiatives. Teachers have little contact with feeder schools and there is no evidence that they have actively sought to build bridges for the pupils' benefit.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and their personal development is poor in all aspects. The one exception is again in the nursery where children's personal and social development is nurtured in a very effective way. It is inexcusable that they regress the moment they join the reception class where provision is very poor indeed.
36. The acting headteacher identified how poor the provision was on her arrival and has introduced several measures to begin to rectify a situation where the self-esteem of pupils and staff was equally low. She believes that it is essential to provide excellent role models and to demonstrate the way in which individuals relate to one another in words and deeds. These initiatives were already beginning to founder during the inspection when some staff were seen by inspectors to humiliate children in public. Teachers do not encourage pupils to develop self-discipline and rarely highlight instances of positive behaviour as an example to others.
37. The very narrow curriculum affords few opportunities to consider how others live or to understand their values and beliefs. Religious education makes an insignificant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral or cultural development. Pupils do not develop an awareness of life in a multi-racial society. The school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship, nor do assemblies promote spiritual growth. During the inspection, assemblies did not offer pupils any opportunities for reflection; no reference was made to a higher being and on one occasion the main focus was on organisational matters, not the act of worship.
38. The very narrow range of teaching and learning strategies does not give pupils opportunities to make constructive contributions in lessons. There is very little sense of a school community and pupils are not given opportunities to use their initiative or to play a full part. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to participate in teams and clubs or to represent their school in other ways.

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

39. The last report indicated that the good support, guidance and welfare of the pupils was a strength of the school. This is no longer the case. The monitoring and support provided for pupils' welfare and academic performance in all areas of the school apart from the nursery are poor. The school is failing to provide a caring and supportive environment in which pupils have confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously. This is having a negative impact on learning.
40. The school has established good admission arrangements into the nursery where all members of staff make a positive contribution to the nursery's caring ethos. They pay very close attention to

protecting children from harm and to promoting their health, safety and general well-being. Staff get to know the children quickly and respond very readily to their needs.

41. This is not the case in the rest of the school where a high turnover of staff and poor induction arrangements contribute to a general lack of knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual needs. Many parents complain that staff do not know their children well and, in particular, to which year group pupils in mixed-age group classes belong. Parents are also concerned that supply staff are not told important facts, including important medical details, about their children. Although child protection procedures are in place, arrangements are unsatisfactory, as many staff have not received the appropriate training. The health and safety procedures are ineffective as there has been no fire drill this term.
42. The school's procedures for monitoring and dealing with problems of bad behaviour are poor. Many staff have ineffective strategies for ensuring discipline with the result that poorly behaved pupils frequently disrupt other pupils' learning. Staff throughout the school fail to apply the school rules consistently and pupils often receive mixed messages about what is acceptable behaviour. Some pupils and their parents feel that bad behaviour appears to be rewarded with extra attention and classroom support, while pupils working quietly are mostly ignored. In an attempt to control behaviour, some classroom assistants stand up during lessons, thereby adopting a 'policing' role instead of a supporting one, and this can have an adverse effect on pupils' ability to concentrate and participate in lessons.
43. Of particular concern during the inspection was the way in which some teachers lost their tempers with pupils and resorted to shouting or making negative and sarcastic comments. On one occasion, a perfectly innocent situation led to a member of staff shouting harshly and unnecessarily at an older pupil in front of others. Apart from teachers acting as poor role models, this inhibits pupils from confiding in them and seeking their help and guidance.
44. There were several incidences during the inspection where aggressive and uncontrolled behaviour from a few pupils affected the safety of their classmates. Inspectors observed fighting and rough play during lessons, which resulted in tears and disruption in class, and, in one case, physical abuse. In the Key Stage 1 classes, the unruly behaviour of several boys was sometimes allowed to get out of control when they charged round the classroom, stood on desks, knocked over chairs and ran out of lessons. In a Key Stage 2 science lesson the pupils were examining soil samples. They were not wearing protective gloves and the teacher did not make any mention of the health and safety issues connected with this. Parents told inspectors of their serious concerns about the ease in which children can walk out of some classes during the school day and play unsupervised in the playground.
45. Although the school is making efforts to improve procedures for monitoring attendance, current performance is unsatisfactory. Many parents do not co-operate with the school's instructions to give timely explanations for their children's absence. The school has started to telephone home when a pupil has not come to school, but teachers do not routinely follow up unexplained absences with letters to parents. The level of unauthorised absences remains unacceptably high. The school receives good support from the Education Welfare Service in monitoring the extended absences of some pupils.
46. The procedures for the assessment of children in the nursery are very good. Detailed assessments are carried out on entry and staff use this information well to adjust their planning to match the needs of each child. In the rest of the school, procedures for assessing pupils' learning are poor. Procedures for tracking the pupils' learning in English and mathematics are poor. This was the case at the time of the last inspection and, although it was a key issue for action, the weakness has not been addressed. Although optional tests are given to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, little action is taken to raise achievements. There is clear evidence that high ability pupils are under-achieving because they are not being challenged appropriately. Where teachers are keeping records of pupils' progress and achievements, they do not use the information constructively to alter classroom practice or to help them plan lessons to ensure that pupils achieve their true potential. In many



classes there is little evidence of teachers knowing their pupils well or recognising their needs. They do not have a good picture of their pupils' strengths and weakness, either in their work, or in their personal development. There is little evidence of teachers meeting regularly to discuss pupils' progress and working together to remedy any weaknesses or problems.

47. Although there is effective liaison with outside support agencies, including the school nurse, provision for pupils with special educational needs is poor and the school fails to follow all the recommendations of the national Code of Practice.

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

48. The last report indicated that the good partnership with parents was a strength of the school. This is no longer the case. The links with parents, in most areas of the school, are poor. Parents are not satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves. This is having an adverse effect on children's learning and the life of the school. The one area where parents are satisfied with both the quality of provision and their partnership is the nursery.
49. Information from the parent questionnaires and the pre-inspection meeting indicates that many parents do not feel involved in the life and work of the school and have a number of significant concerns. Inspection evidence supports parents' concerns about the way in which the school fails to work in partnership with them. Parents' lack of involvement in the school impacts adversely on their children's learning.
50. The school's communications with parents and the quality of information it provides for them are poor. Although most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with problems, teachers do little to encourage further parental involvement. For example, parents are not given advance information about the topics pupils will be covering in lessons and meetings have not been held to help parents understand the recent introduction of the numeracy and literacy hours. Although parent consultation evenings are well-attended and annual reports to parents contain a lot of information, many parents are unclear about the standards their children are achieving or the areas where they need help to improve. However, several parents and teachers agree that a lack of interest and co-operation from some parents does not help matters. There is evidence that parents do not always support their children's learning at home, for example, by listening to them read, or by helping with homework. Many meetings that the school does hold are poorly attended; for example, only 25 per cent of parents of reception class children attended a pre-school induction meeting. Many parents do not co-operate with the school by reporting children's absences or by committing themselves to the home-school agreement.
51. Parents also have concerns with other aspects of the school's provision. Many do not have confidence in the way the school is led and managed and many are very worried by the bad behaviour of some pupils and the disruptive effect it has on lessons. They are also concerned about homework and the limited range of extra-curricular activities the school provides. Inspection evidence supports parents' concerns.
52. There is a small but very committed Friends of Lawn Association, which works hard to contribute towards school funds and to improve the environment by undertaking projects around the school. A few parents work tirelessly to run the school's extra-curricular activities. There is also a successful lunchtime craft club run by parents and a governor. Several parents help in class and accompany classes on outside trips. The help that these parents give is valued by the school and makes a small but significant impact on children's learning.

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

53. The last report indicated that the headteacher provided competent and determined leadership and that the governors fulfilled their statutory duties and used their expertise to benefit the school and

its management. However, the school was deemed to have serious weaknesses that included a high proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching, the lack of a strategic development plan and the limited input of subject co-ordinators. The school has not tackled the weaknesses and the position is worse now than it was at the time of the last inspection.

54. The leadership and management of the school are very poor. This results in very poor teaching and learning and very low standards. The school is still trying to recover from the very poor management in the past. An acting headteacher has been appointed but this mountain needs a very experienced climber and a strong back-up team. In the one term she has been in post, little has changed apart from cosmetic improvements to the building. Leadership and management in the nursery are excellent and children get off to a really good start. However, the nursery is seen as a separate entity and opportunities have been missed to spread the excellent practice there to the rest of the school.
55. The quality of educational leadership and direction is very poor. There is a constant turnover of staff and the school relies heavily on supply teachers. When they arrive at the school, although they are made to feel welcome, they are not given effective support that will help them in teaching the pupils. For example, the reception and Year 1 teacher is a visitor to the country who has not had any training in the National Curriculum or in the literacy and numeracy strategies. Although she has extra help in the classroom, this is often to control the unruly behaviour or to teach groups of pupils.
56. The acting headteacher's monitoring of teaching is very poor. Although she patrols the school regularly, this is more of a policing role than an evaluative one. Although she has seen mathematics being taught, she has not given effective feedback to teachers to address the very poor teaching and learning. Her main aim is to round up disaffected pupils and send them back to class. During the inspection, although she supported occasionally in the reception and Year 1 class, she did not take the opportunity to lead by example by teaching a class or taking an assembly.
57. The co-ordinators do not play any part in leading their subjects, either in ordering resources or monitoring standards. It seems to be an accepted fact that teachers will please themselves what they teach. Consequently, many subjects are not taught in sufficient depth and pupils are not receiving their entitlement to a balanced curriculum.
58. The governors' involvement in running the school is very poor. For far too long, they have accepted without question what they have been told. Although they have undertaken some monitoring of individual lessons, they have lost sight of the larger picture. They have failed to meet their statutory duties in ensuring that the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all its pupils. They were aware, for example, that information technology was not being taught because there was only one computer, but they did not address this issue until they knew that a further inspection was imminent. They have also failed to ensure that the teachers appointed to the school have the necessary expertise and subject knowledge to take pupils' learning forward. Both the Chair and the Vice-Chair resigned immediately prior to the inspection and the local authority took the decision to appoint replacements.
59. The results of the National Curriculum tests have been consistently low since 1996. In Key Stage 2, they have always been in the bottom five per cent in the country. The acting headteacher, governors and staff link this to the pupils' poor backgrounds, the low expectations of parents and pupils, and the mobility of pupils. Their purpose in analysing test data is not to see where they can improve, but where they can lay the blame. An analysis of pupil mobility reveals that, in 1999, pupils who joined the school in the last two years of Key Stage 2 did just as well as, and sometimes better than, those who had been right through the school.
60. There is a fundamental weakness in the belief that new initiatives will, in themselves, raise standards. It is abundantly clear that the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies are not having a positive impact on learning, but there has been no attempt to monitor practice in the classrooms in order to find out why. The school has recently adopted the latest guidance for most

subjects but no attempt has been made to adapt this to the needs of the school. The lack of teachers' subject knowledge in many areas has not been tackled. Once the children leave the nursery, very little is done to address their needs either academically or on a personal level. Although the school has an appropriate set of aims, there is no commitment to achieving them because the weaknesses in teaching and the unsatisfactory relationships are not being addressed.

61. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are unsatisfactory. The newly-appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed, but has not yet received training. She lacks the expertise and experience to lead such an important area with security. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. Although they are given good support in withdrawal groups, they are not supported effectively in class.
62. The school has great difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers. There is a constant turnover of staff, usually from supply agencies. Their poor subject knowledge, the lack of effective induction procedures and the fact that they do not stay long enough to get to know the pupils are major factors in the very poor learning. The accommodation is generally adequate to allow all subjects to be taught effectively. There is a significant lack of resources in most subjects. This is another factor in the very poor learning.
63. The school development plan is a very poor document that does not support a clear way forward in raising standards. There is not enough clear detail to set out the school's priorities and procedures for bringing about improvements. There is also not enough information about the procedures to be used for measuring the effectiveness of initiatives. The support of educational priorities through effective financial planning is very poor. The plan is not costed and there is no long-term strategic view of the financial needs of the school.
64. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is very poor. Until very recently there was only one computer to be shared among all classes and no computer in the school office. Although these weaknesses have now been addressed, it is too early for the improvements to have had an impact. The school's effective use of earmarked grant for its purpose is very poor. For example, the school's budget for special educational needs was £26 071 last year, but only £11 596 was spent on this. The budget for special needs this year, 1999 – 2000, is £40 255, but only £17 567 has been spent. The school is unable to say where the rest of the money has gone. The school has not been audited since 1991 and this is unsatisfactory. The school could not provide any evidence that the principles of best value for money have ever been applied and this aspect of financial management is very poor.
65. The school does not have the capacity to improve because the governors, headteacher and staff do not have a clear insight into what needs to be done for the school to improve or how to effect the improvement.

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

In order to give the pupils an acceptable standard of education and to raise standards of work rapidly in all subjects, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve significantly the quality of leadership and management by:
  - Setting clear educational direction and establishing who will do what in terms of leadership and management;  
(Paragraphs 54, 57, 89, 97, 109)
  - Establishing a comprehensive development plan that sets out clearly the school's targets for improving standards, what it will do to achieve those targets and how it will measure the effectiveness of the actions taken;  
(Paragraph 63)
  - Ensuring that the governing body undertakes its responsibilities for strategic governance through systematic monitoring, in order to address the school's strengths and weaknesses;  
(Paragraphs 58, 59)
  - Improving the quality of financial management in order to ensure that there are adequate resources in the school to teach all subjects effectively and to ensure that earmarked grants are used appropriately.  
(Paragraphs 64, 89, 97, 106, 110, 116, 118, 122, 132)
2. Bring the quality of teaching up to satisfactory standards as a matter of urgency by:
  - Raising significantly teachers' expectations of the work that pupils are capable of tackling;  
(Paragraphs 69, 81, 86, 93, 96, 103, 105, 111, 113)
  - Implementing an effective programme of induction in order to support teachers new to the school;  
(Paragraph 55)
  - Implementing an effective programme of appraisal and performance management in order to identify staff professional development needs effectively;  
(Paragraph 55)
  - Establishing a staff development programme that addresses the weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, and the needs of co-ordinators to undertake their monitoring roles;  
(Paragraphs 60, 62, 88, 89, 96, 97, 104, 105, 106, 113, 117, 132)
  - Ensuring that the headteacher makes it a priority to undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the school;  
(Paragraph 56)
  - Implementing a regular programme of monitoring of teaching and standards by subject co-ordinators;  
(Paragraphs 57, 109, 122, 125, 133)

- Identifying best practice within the school in order to improve teachers' expertise and confidence.  
(Paragraph 54)
3. Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
    - Ensuring that statutory requirements are met in information and communications technology and religious education;  
(Paragraphs 118, 122, 133)
    - Developing suitable programmes of work for all subjects and ensuring that all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught consistently in all classes.  
(Paragraphs 57, 99, 107, 110, 123, 133)
  4. Improve the quality of provision for pupils' personal development by:
    - Devising and implementing an effective behaviour policy and ensuring that it is applied consistently;  
(Paragraphs 21, 42, 44, 51, 87, 96, 108, 123, 127)
    - Improving the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and ensuring that all adults provide good role models;  
(Paragraphs 21, 36, 42, 43, 123)
    - Providing opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning, for example, research skills, as they move through the school.  
(Paragraphs 21, 38, 87, 92)
  5. Improve the quality of care for pupils by:
    - Ensuring that the pupils' safety and welfare is at the forefront of the teachers' lesson planning, and raising their awareness of the risks associated with the use of some resources;  
(Paragraphs 41, 44, 69, 126)
    - Developing and implementing effective procedures that will enable teachers to match work appropriately to pupils' needs.  
(Paragraphs 46, 54, 88, 96, 105, 113, 115)
    - Making sure that teachers have all the essential information they need about individual pupils in order to ensure their safety.  
(Paragraph 41)
  6. Improve the quality of the partnership with parents by:
    - Giving them more information about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing.  
(Paragraphs 49, 50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9%	9%	9%	6%	48%	18%

*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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	115
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		57

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	60

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2
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	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	5	4	3
	Total	8	7	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67	58	58
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	4	5	6
	Total	7	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58	67	83
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The school was unable to supply the relevant data.

### 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	13	3	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	3	5
	Girls	0	1	0
	Total	1	4	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	6	25	31
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	4	4
	Girls	1	1	2
	Total	3	5	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	20	33	40
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The school was unable to supply the relevant data.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	91
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	1
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.

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	28.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	271198
Total expenditure	274730
Expenditure per pupil	2216
Balance brought forward from previous year	9802
Balance carried forward to next year	6270

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**



Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	143
Number of questionnaires returned	37

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59 (22)	41 (15)	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41 (15)	35 (13)	14 (5)	3 (1)	8 (3)
Behaviour in the school is good.	24 (9)	41 (15)	16 (6)	11 (4)	8 (3)
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27 (10)	43 (16)	16 (6)	11 (4)	3 (1)
The teaching is good.	38 (14)	46 (17)	5 (2)	3 (1)	8 (3)
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43 (16)	35 (13)	16 (6)	5 (2)	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46 (17)	46 (17)	8 (3)	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46 (17)	41 (15)	3 (1)	3 (1)	8 (3)
The school works closely with parents.	30 (11)	41 (15)	16 (6)	5 (2)	8 (3)
The school is well led and managed.	32 (12)	32 (12)	22 (8)	3 (1)	11 (4)
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32 (12)	54 (20)	11 (4)	0	3 (1)
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5 (2)	32 (12)	32 (12)	11 (4)	19 (7)

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Ten written responses were received. Most of these were concerned with the unacceptable behaviour. Two expressed concern about the high turnover of staff.

## **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**

66. Children enter the nursery in the term following their third birthday. They transfer to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 43 children under five, including 28 in the nursery.
67. The majority of children enter the nursery with levels of attainment below those found nationally, especially in language and social skills, which are well below. They make very good progress in learning while they are in the nursery, due to the very good teaching and the rich learning environment that the nursery provides. By the time they enter the reception class, they are well on target to achieve the desirable learning outcomes in all the areas of learning except language and literacy, which is still well below average. However, learning stops once the children enter the reception class. All the good work done in the nursery is undone very quickly. The curriculum in this mixed reception and Year 1 class does not take sufficient account of the developmental needs of very young children and promotes very poor behaviour as a result. By the time they are five, the majority of children are achieving well below the nationally approved desirable learning outcomes in all the areas of learning. This is a very significant decline since the last inspection when the majority of children achieved the desirable learning outcomes and some exceeded them.

### **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

68. Despite the very good start they get in the nursery, learning overall is poor. By the age of five, attainment is well below the desirable learning outcomes. Children settle well into the secure and welcoming environment of the nursery. They develop good social skills through the very good quality teaching and the consistent approach by all the adults. They gain confidence and good levels of independence through the very good opportunities provided for them. For example, they know that they can have their snack at any time and they help themselves. This involves finding their own named dish and pouring their juice from a jug into a cup. They manage this very well and tidy away afterwards. They share equipment fairly and take turns. This is a result of the excellent relationships with their teachers. The teachers plan carefully to ensure that all the children have equal opportunities to take the lead in lessons, for example, playing instruments or giving out equipment. This keeps all the children happy because they know that they will get a turn and they follow the good examples set in their independent play. Behaviour is very good because the adults provide very good role models and the children are always gainfully occupied in purposeful and enjoyable learning experiences.
69. After such positive experiences in the nursery, the children find it extremely difficult to adapt to life in the reception and Year 1 class. The contrast between the oasis and the desert gives them a very negative view of what school is about. The very poor curriculum does not take sufficient account of their developmental needs and, as a result, they become frustrated and bored and very poorly behaved. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very poor overall. The teachers have very low expectations of behaviour and frequently shout above the noise. They do not earn the respect of the children by providing worthwhile experiences for them. As a result, the children are often rude and non-co-operative. Their very poor behaviour and attitudes to work have a seriously negative impact on learning in all areas. During the inspection, their very poor behaviour during a physical education lesson caused serious concerns for their safety despite the fact that there were five adults present. When the children are well motivated, their attitudes to learning improve significantly. This was shown in a music lesson taken by a visiting teacher from the Kent Music School. The quality of the teaching in this lesson was very good and this was repaid by the children's very positive attitudes. They were enthralled throughout the lesson. They behaved very well and were all enthusiastic to play a full part. As a result of such a positive and pleasurable experience, learning was very good.

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

70. Learning is poor overall despite the good start the children make in the nursery. By the age of five, standards of attainment are well below the desirable learning outcomes. They enter the nursery with poor speaking and listening skills. The very good teaching leads to very good learning. The children listen very attentively to teachers and adults because they know from experience that these people have interesting things to say to them. Whether they are listening to stories or questions about a learning activity, they hang on to every word that is said. They get pleasure from listening to stories because they are chosen well for relevance and interest and the teachers bring the stories to life. They learn the conventions of reading from watching their teachers. During the inspection, a boy invited an inspector to listen to a story. He had the same high expectations of good behaviour from the inspector as his teacher has from the children in the class. He asked the inspector, very politely, to put down her pen and clipboard before climbing onto her lap to read the story. He pointed to the words as he retold the story and asked relevant questions about the pictures. The very good interaction between the adults and the children, during group work, promotes speaking and listening skills very well. A good start is made to reading and writing through the wealth of opportunities that are provided, for example, writing letters in the 'Post Office' and reading labels around the room.
71. In the reception class, the quality of teaching is very poor because the teacher has very poor subject knowledge. She has not had any training in teaching the National Curriculum or the National Literacy Strategy. The children's love of books is quickly replaced by negative feelings of resentment and apathy because they are not associated with pleasure as they were in the nursery. They find it difficult to listen to anything they are told, whether it is a story or instructions, because they are not interested. Learning stops for the majority of children and, by the time they are five, they have lost the good learning habits and positive attitudes to reading and writing that were developed so well in the nursery. The activities that they are asked to do have no learning content because there is not enough teaching input. For example, in a literacy lesson, one group of children were making plasticine models of pigs. Although this activity was loosely connected to the purpose of the main part of the lesson, i.e. learning the sound of the letter 'p', the teacher did not, at any time, mention the letter or its sound. It was a pointless activity that did not contribute to learning in literacy.

## MATHEMATICS

72. Learning is poor overall and, by the age of five, standards of attainment are well below the desirable learning outcomes. They make a good start in the nursery because of the very good teaching. The teachers here provide a wealth of very good learning experiences that are planned very well to take individual children forward in their learning. The activities are purposeful and enjoyable for the children. For example, the role-play corner has been converted to a post office. Here the children buy stamps of different shapes for their letters. They then post them in the appropriate box according to their shape. The teachers maximise every opportunity for learning. One little girl invited an inspector to play the triangle. As she played it, the little girl sang, '*Three straight sides, three straight sides, triangle, triangle,*' to the tune of 'Three Blind Mice'. They are taught ordinal numbers effectively as they go out to play. The teacher holds up cards with their names and they say the order they will go out, following on from the one before.
73. The very poor quality teaching in the reception class does not build on what the children can do already. There are no opportunities for incidental learning. The poor management of the pupils, the rigid structure of lessons and the resultant very poor behaviour all serve to prevent learning. The children simply 'switch off' because there is no pleasure for them. The majority still need considerable support to order numbers to ten and to count back from 20. Their knowledge of mathematical shapes is poor.

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

74. Learning is poor overall and, by the age of five, standards of attainment are well below the desirable learning outcomes. The very good teaching in the nursery gets the children off to a good start by providing a very good range of learning experiences. Photographs are taken of class visits and these are used very well to recall the events either with individual children or with small groups. The children develop an appropriate sense of chronology and show a good awareness of the places and buildings in the locality. Well-chosen stories support learning well. For example, during the inspection, a story about different creatures laying eggs took their learning forward from their limited experience of chickens' eggs, and laid good foundations for learning about life cycles. The children develop a good awareness of the properties of materials when they make models from found materials. They soon learn which materials will stick together and which will need other methods of joining. They are supported well in using the computer to reinforce learning. They learn, through cooking activities, that heating can change materials.
75. The very poor teaching and the structure of the curriculum in the reception class mean that the children do not have enough experiences in this area for any further learning to take place. They quickly forget what has gone before and so the earlier learning is undone.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

76. Learning is unsatisfactory and, by the age of five, standards of attainment are below the desirable learning outcomes. They make a very good start in the nursery due to the very good teaching. The teachers plan a very good range of experiences, carefully thought out to develop the children's physical skills. Everyday learning activities involve the use of a good range of equipment and small tools, such as scissors and hole punches. Further activities, such as construction toys, sewing and jigsaws contribute well to the development of fine motor skills. The teachers make good use of the outside play area where they guide the children well in using large play equipment to develop gross motor skills.
77. In the reception class, the very poor quality of teaching means that little further learning takes place. The children use a very limited range of equipment in the classroom and they do not have enough opportunities to use tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and rulers to improve their fine motor skills. Many of them have difficulty controlling their pencils when they are writing. In a physical education lesson, during the inspection, although they could hop reasonably well, the majority showed a lack of spatial awareness.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

78. Learning is poor overall and, by the age of five, standards of attainment are below the desirable learning outcomes. The very good quality teaching in the nursery gives the children a good start in this area. Teachers take time to talk to them and encourage them to explore colours in their painting. They join in well with role-play, at appropriate times, to extend learning but also realise that the children need time to develop their own ideas. A good example of imaginative role-play was seen when two children played well together at being the parents of a young baby. They bathed the baby, dressed her and then took her shopping in her pram. The children enjoy singing and join in well with the actions.
79. In the reception class, the children develop satisfactory rhythmic skills through clapping and tapping to the music. They have good listening skills and their singing skills are beginning to develop satisfactorily. The poor teaching and the very poor curriculum mean that they do not have enough opportunities to develop their creativity. The structure of the timetable means that there is only one set art lesson a week and there is no opportunity for imaginative play.

## **ENGLISH**

80. All the pupils make very poor progress in learning and standards of attainment in all aspects are very low at the end of both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils have very poor literacy skills. They have remained at this low level over the past three years with no benefits accruing from the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and intensive staff development. In 1999, only six per cent of Key Stage 2 pupils attained the expected level 4 and a quarter failed to reach level 3. This means that the pupils were over two years behind pupils of the same age nationally. Standards have deteriorated year on year between 1997 and 1999.
81. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those who speak English as an additional language, make poor progress overall. They make better progress in reading than they do in writing, speaking and listening because they receive individual support and encouragement on a regular basis. Potential higher-attaining pupils make very poor progress because teachers rarely consider their specific needs and if they plan separate activities, these fail to challenge and motivate the pupils.
82. The school has not only failed to address the key issue to improve attainment and progress at both key stages, but standards have fallen and progress has slowed to an unacceptable rate since the previous inspection. Aspects that were previously judged to be satisfactory, such as the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1, handwriting and spelling have all deteriorated to an unacceptably low level.
83. Standards of speaking and listening are very poor throughout the school and pupils make very poor progress in using their skills across the curriculum. The vast majority of pupils have poor concentration and older pupils openly 'switch off' and refuse to answer. Teachers do nothing to encourage active listening, for instance, raising their voices above the noise and frequently shouting or using grating voices. Most teachers have poor diction, do not always speak grammatically and often do not finish their sentences. They do not present lessons in a lively fashion and rarely speak with enthusiasm; so many pupils are not encouraged to listen. Standards in speaking are equally low because teachers do not plan actively for pupils to speak for a range of purposes, either in front of an audience, in small group discussion or in pairs. Pupils generally give very short answers, have an impoverished vocabulary and their speech lacks clarity, correctness and expression.
84. Most pupils make poor progress in reading. Few pupils enjoy reading for pleasure, and most have a limited knowledge of authors or favourite characters. Throughout the school, most read mechanically and with little expression, paying scant attention to punctuation or to picture or context clues to uncover the meaning. Pupils have not been taught how to work out unfamiliar words and very few have a sound grasp of phonics to enable them to build unfamiliar words with a regular structure. Many pupils have such poor general knowledge that they do not understand the text, even when they read words correctly. Younger pupils are often unable to express simple preferences or to speculate on what might happen next. The oldest pupils have a very limited knowledge of different authors. They revert to following the text with their fingers when presented with a more demanding information book. They read at a literal level and do not understand subtleties of language or plot. Although many pupils have additional support with reading and benefit from reading to an interested adult on a one-to-one basis, teachers have poor understanding of reading development and pay too little attention to word level work during the literacy hour. Teachers have ignored the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils.
85. Standards in writing are very poor. Handwriting and standards of presentation are poor. Teachers take no account of the individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and in lessons pupils are too frequently asked to practise what they can already do. At Key Stage 1, pupils' books do not show gradual improvement but demonstrate extreme inconsistency in the formation and size of letters, and in the ability to join letters. At Key Stage 2, a majority of pupils' handwriting is neither fully legible nor fluent.
86. Teachers have very low expectations of what pupils can do and rarely provide opportunities for them to express their ideas on paper. Much of what they write is copied directly from worksheets, and this is not always achieved correctly. In Key Stage 2, pupils also spend too much time copying out or filling in gaps on published worksheets whose arid and repetitive content does

nothing to spark their interest or imagination. They do not see themselves as apprentice writers because they are not given enough opportunities to write for a purpose or at length. Pupils in Year 6 have developed a sound grasp of different styles, such as fables, play scripts, leaflets and diary entries. However, their stories are immature, punctuation is poor and their vocabulary lacks variety and interest. Many pupils make grammatical errors and few use idiomatic expression or figurative language as part of their repertoire.

87. Pupils show little interest in their lessons and often behave badly. They have poor concentration and often do the minimum they can get away with. They rarely come up with their own ideas and their answers are usually perfunctory. Some pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class showed genuine enjoyment in rereading a Big Book together, but more often than not pupils do not show any initiative in their learning and are rarely motivated to try hard. A majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 show varying degrees of disaffection during lessons, talking over the teacher and each other, lying over desks and doing other things when they should be listening. This is as a direct result of the teacher's inability to gain their attention with a clearly structured and well-presented lesson that has pace and interest.
88. Teaching is very poor at both key stages. This represents a marked deterioration since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound overall and slightly stronger at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers have poor subject knowledge, and have not got to grips with the structure or the underlying principles of the literacy hour. Text level work is better than word and sentence level work, but it is still unsatisfactory. Teachers are not technically competent in teaching phonics, and they are poor role models for handwriting, spelling and speaking clearly and correctly. Their planning is very poor. Texts are not always appropriate for the broad learning objectives and lessons lack structure and coherence. Teachers have a poor understanding of how to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, and consequently expect pupils to tackle work that is too easy for some and far too difficult for others. They have poor questioning skills, generally asking closed questions and wanting a specific answer. In the lessons seen, if pupils' answers did not address the question directly, the teacher would ignore the response and not use it to involve them in the lesson or to uncover their misunderstanding. Teachers use a narrow repertoire of methods and organisation, and do not manage pupils well. Most lessons had no pace and one section drifted into another. Introductions were not clear, group work was allowed to go on for far too long and the plenary session was not used to draw threads together or to enable pupils to understand what they had done well and how they could improve next time.
89. The very low standards, poor attitudes and behaviour and the very poor teaching are a direct result of ineffectual leadership and management. The literacy strategy has made no impact whatsoever. The co-ordinator does not have the subject knowledge or expertise to address these serious weaknesses. He has been faced with a monumental task in a school where there is a significant turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting experienced teachers. The school has acquired new resources, but has not always spent its money wisely, choosing to rely heavily on a published scheme without considering how well it is suited to the needs of the pupils. This subject needs radical root and branch surgery if standards are to be raised in a systematic and sustained manner. The weaknesses in whole school curriculum planning severely limit the opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. If standards are to be raised, pupils need to read a wide range of books, and learning experiences must provide them with something of interest to speak and write about.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. Learning is very poor throughout the school. By the end of both key stages, standards are very low. Throughout the school, pupils have very poor numeracy skills and this inhibits their learning across the subject.
91. In the reception and Year 1 class, pupils are unable to count forwards and backwards to 20 without considerable prompting from the teacher. Holding cards numbered one to 20, pupils are

unable to stand in the correct order without considerable support. A pupil in Year 1 did not know how to write the number 12. In the lesson observed, when pupils were intended to compare the weight of different objects using balances, no meaningful learning took place because too much time was wasted trying to control bad behaviour.

92. In the Year 1 and 2 class, a group of higher ability pupils could count forwards and backwards to 100 with reasonable accuracy, but not all of them could give the pairs of numbers which make 20 with confidence, for example,  $2 + 18$ , or  $15 + 5$ . In the lower ability group, many pupils were still not able to count forwards and backwards to 20 with security without the prompting of the learning support assistant. The support assistants counting loudly with the pupils often mask the lack of knowledge of the pupils. The focus of the work during the inspection was gathering data and portraying the information in block graphs. Pupils had a poorer understanding of the work on Thursday than they had on Tuesday, because the teacher gave them no opportunities for independence and evaluation. The data was provided for them and they were told how to complete their graphs so that the chances to develop or consolidate skills, knowledge and understanding were minimal.
93. Above average ability pupils in Year 4 were confident with the multiples of two and three, but many others, who still needed to count on their fingers or check the charts on the wall, were slow to calculate answers. Average Year 3 and 4 pupils were unsure of the answer to  $3 \times 10$ , and some thought it was 27. Poor standards are due to the failure of the teacher to share her objectives with the pupils. She tells them what they will do and not what they will learn. The teacher's expectations are not high enough. This is confirmed by a scrutiny of pupils' books, where work for pupils in Year 4 seldom went beyond Level 2 of the National Curriculum. The work of higher and average attaining pupils was almost invariably correct, which indicates that they are working at too low a level.
94. In the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were not able to say with any confidence in a mental session what sort of sum they would use to solve a problem. There was a steady stream of mistakes, with pupils confusing addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. The teacher made no effort to correct mistakes or explain where they were going wrong. The upper ability Year 6 group could not divide 45 by 3 because their knowledge of place value is still insecure. In the lower ability Year 6 group, all the pupils thought that  $4 \times 8 = 36$ , and could not see where it was wrong. Pupils in the upper ability Year 5 group had a poor understanding of the four rules and could not discuss their work with any confidence. Their knowledge of place value is poor. A typical mistake was  $\pounds 5.80 + \pounds 2.80 = \pounds 7.80$ . The lower ability Year 5 group was working with the classroom support assistant and it was clear that they would not have been able to complete the tasks successfully without the very close support. Progress during the lesson observed was poor because the lesson plan did not address the weaknesses pupils have in the mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. They do not have the basic skills to complete the tasks given. Pupils are not challenged by the teaching and work at a slow pace.
95. The school has made very poor progress since the last inspection and it is clear that standards are moving backwards. The school is worse now in every aspect raised in the last report. The previous report stated that pupils lack interest, motivation and enjoyment of mathematics, and this remains the same. Many pupils are bored by the quality of lessons provided and are disaffected.
96. The quality of teaching is very poor throughout the school. A key to the failure is the very low expectations teachers have, so that pupils are bored in lessons and either go off task or are badly behaved. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, seven pupils were lolling across their desks taking no notice at all, but the teacher ignored this. Teachers' subject knowledge is unsatisfactory because not only do they not have a very good understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the requirements of the numeracy strategy, but also they have an unsatisfactory knowledge of how to teach mathematics effectively. They do not know how to inspire pupils and raise their interest. Planning is poor. It is almost always directed to the whole class with very little or no thought given to the different groups within the class. It is not focused on need and is not adequate to address the fundamental weaknesses pupils now have. The quality and use of assessment are very poor, and



work is not matched to pupils' prior attainment. The management of pupils is not always secure. Pupils in the reception and Year 1 class are running virtually out of control and this prevents effective learning from taking place. Sometimes there are as many as five adults in the class, but this still does not curb the bad behaviour. The behaviour in the Year 5 and 6 class is almost as bad, with constant reminders needed from the teacher. This adds further to the slow pace of lessons. Pupils apply little intellectual effort to their work and productivity is very poor.

97. The leadership and management of the subject are very poor in almost all aspects. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and standards across the school are all very poor. The school has not set appropriate targets to raise standards or improve the quality of teaching with any precision. The targets that have been set in the school's development plan have not been pursued with any rigour and this has resulted in a significant fall in quality and standards since the last inspection. Resources are totally inadequate to meet the needs of the numeracy strategy and this is an additional reason why the school's strategy for teaching numeracy is very poor.

## SCIENCE

98. Standards at the end of both key stages are very low. Throughout the school, pupils have very little scientific knowledge and understanding. They make very poor progress in learning as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, the level of understanding of the highest attaining pupils is what would be expected of average attaining pupils in Year 2.
99. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand forces at a very simple level. They know that pushing or pulling them can move objects. They also know that some objects can be made to move more quickly by pushing them harder. Their level of understanding is on a par with that of nursery children. However, the poor teaching has led them to believe that all objects, including pendulums, move faster if they are pushed harder. They were taught this as a fact in the lesson observed during the inspection. The very small amount of work in the pupils' books is of a poor standard and most of it has been copied. Discussions with pupils confirm that very little work has been done. Even with prompting and probing questions, it is not possible to draw out satisfactory answers to simple questions relating to materials or the growth of plants from seeds.
100. Discussion with eight of the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 confirmed their very poor knowledge and understanding. Although four of them could say that plants need water and sunlight to grow, they could not give any reasons. They could not name any parts of a flowering plant. The only examples of seed dispersal that they could give were seeds being eaten by birds or falling on the ground. Only one boy could identify the things that were necessary for animals to survive. They have a basic understanding of food chains, but they are confused by the terminology to describe them. They know that a fox is a predator but when asked what the rabbit was in this food chain, they said it was the producer. They do not know what the term 'producer' means in this context. Work in their books shows that they have not been taught these terms and also that they have not been taught the scientific representation of a food chain. Pupils of all abilities have coloured in a photocopied picture representing the plants and animals in a pyramid. Some pupils' work is not labelled and it is, therefore, not much more than a colouring exercise. Without labelling, it cannot be used as an effective record of learning.
101. They know that materials can be classified as solids, liquids and gases but they do not know enough about their properties. They say, for example, that all solids are hard and will not bend. They do not change their minds even when careful questioning and probing draws out of them that the clothes they are wearing are solids. When asked what had happened to the rain puddles in the playground, they said that they had dried up or disappeared. Pressed for a scientific explanation of where the water had gone, only two remembered the term evaporation. The pupils do not learn scientific vocabulary because it is not taught. In the lesson observed in the Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher asked for the scientific term for what water turns into when it is boiled. The pupil answered, 'steam', and was told, 'excellent, well done'. At no time when he was talking about water changing did the teacher use the terms 'evaporation' or 'condensation'.

102. The pupils have a very basic knowledge of circuits. They know, for example, that a bulb will light if it is connected by wire to a battery. They cannot describe the effect of adding more bulbs and they are not sure about which materials will conduct electricity. Their understanding of forces is limited to the force of gravity, 'making things stay on the earth'. They do not know that air resistance slows a parachute or that a toy car does not move as quickly on carpet as it does on tiles because of friction. When asked what causes shadows, only one boy knew the answer. The rest said that, 'the sun makes a reflection'.
103. The school has made very poor progress since the last inspection and it is clear that standards have declined from being below national expectations to being very low. Learning has gone from being unsatisfactory to very poor. The last report indicated that the quality of pupils' response was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. The position remains the same in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, but the quality of response in Years 5 and 6 is very poor. These pupils are simply not interested in the poor quality curriculum that is offered. They are bored by the low level activities such as in the lesson that was observed when they were asked to, 'Predict what will happen to a bar of chocolate if it is heated; what will happen if it is allowed to cool? Is the change that occurs reversible? Write how you will test your prediction'. It was clear from the pupils' responses that they knew that this was a worthless exercise. Only about three pupils bothered to write anything in their books. The rest wandered about the room or went outside into the corridor, or sprawled across their desks and generally amused themselves by chatting or doodling on their worksheets. One boy decided to read a book. The teacher's close proximity had no effect on the very poor behaviour. They showed disrespect and a total disregard for him.
104. The quality of teaching is very poor in both key stages. The teachers have poor subject knowledge and an unsatisfactory understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study. They have very low expectations and lack the ability to interest and motivate the pupils. They have a poor understanding of investigative work. In Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, they provide activities but the activities are not purposeful. This was an area of concern in the last inspection. Although the pupils enjoy doing the activities, they do not learn from them because they are not structured and the teachers are unclear about what they want the pupils to learn from them. This was particularly evident in the Year 1 and 2 class when the teacher demonstrated a magnetic game and then asked the children to do their own investigation. This amounted to copying what she had done, i.e. using a magnet on one side of a card to move a magnetic figure on the other side. There was no suggestion that they should test their magnets on other materials. In another activity in the same lesson, pupils were asked to test pendulums. They were not given any further guidance so they spent the time seeing who could make their pendulum go higher. At no time did the teacher question what they were doing.
105. In the lesson seen in the Year 3 and 4 class, the planning was linked inappropriately to the programme of study for much older pupils. Here again, the activity lacked purpose and did not have any structure to take learning forward. The activity of observing soil and sand did not challenge the pupils because they were not expected to do any recording. Discussion with the Year 5 and 6 pupils revealed that they do not have any opportunities for practical work. Teachers' planning is poor. They teach whole-class lessons and do not consider the learning needs of individuals or groups of pupils.
106. Leadership and management of the subject are poor. The co-ordinator does not have the necessary subject knowledge, expertise or vision to lead the subject forward effectively. It is unrealistic for the governors to expect that a subject can be improved simply by adopting wholesale the latest guidance. There is also a significant shortage of suitable resources. No effort has been put into addressing the many weaknesses identified in the last report.

**ART**

107. Standards are poor throughout the school. This is due to poor quality teaching, which shows low expectations of what pupils can achieve, and a very narrow curriculum. Pupils' experiences are mostly confined to painting, although some observational drawings were displayed in the entrance corridor and there were some drawings in pupils' sketchbooks. The documentation to support teachers gives insufficient guidance, and little or no effort is made by teachers to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding systematically as they move through the school. The paintings in the style of Van Gogh and Monet in the Year 3 and 4 class show little understanding or appreciation of the artists' intentions and purposes. The paintings displayed in the Year 5 and 6 class show a poor level of skill in the application and control of paint. Work in pupils' sketchbooks is often immature and careless, and shows a lack of understanding of their purpose and low expectations. No evidence was found of other aspects of art, for example, three-dimensional work or work with textiles.
108. Only one lesson was observed and this was in the Year 3 and 4 class. This was a follow-up to the visit to the National Gallery the previous day. All aspects of the lesson were poor. The unruly atmosphere in the class was not conducive to learning. The pupils produced very immature pictures of their visit, which were praised by the teacher. The colouring of the pictures with crayons was in very many cases no more than scribbling. The teacher praised the quality of this colouring as if she were seeing something quite different to the reality. There was no artistic purpose to the activities and they did not promote artistic learning in any way. The teacher had a very poor understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Throughout the lesson, the teacher appeared oblivious to the fact that many of the pupils were off task and that no learning was taking place.
109. The quality of leadership and management for art is very poor. No attempt has been made to monitor standards or the quality of teaching, and the result is that pupils are not receiving worthwhile experiences. Standards are significantly lower now than at the time of the last inspection and the issues raised in the last report have not been addressed. It is clear that standards are going backwards. The last report judged that pupils' attitudes to art were positive, but this is no longer true. Many pupils are disaffected and show little or no interest in their work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Learning is very poor and pupils achieve standards that are very low when compared with those expected of pupils the same age. This is because the subject has been neglected for many years. At the time of the last inspection, there was no co-ordinator and this is still the case. During this inspection, it was not possible to discuss the subject with any member of staff. There was no work available because the subject is not taught consistently. It appears to be a matter of choice whether to teach it or not. Year 6 pupils didn't know what design and technology was. After an explanation, they remembered building a tower once in 'circle time' to prove that they could work in a team. One could vaguely remember making something once before but he couldn't remember what it was. None of the pupils could understand what designing a product meant. There are very few resources. This is a worse position than at the time of the last inspection.
111. The overall impact of teaching is very poor. The last report noted that there were big differences in the extent to which design and technology was incorporated into planning in different classes. The difference is not so marked now. This is not an improvement. It means that there is less going on now than there was then. There was no past work available and only one lesson was seen. This was in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching in this lesson was poor. This is a significant decline since the last inspection when the quality of teaching in lessons was sound. The teacher had very low expectations and she showed a poor understanding of the subject. The lesson was simply a making activity with all the pupils following precise instructions from the teacher. The pupils were not given any opportunities to think for themselves and the standards they achieved in the lesson were, at best, on a par with those that would be expected of children in a nursery or reception class.

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

112. The school has made very poor progress in both subjects since the last inspection. Neither subject is given sufficiently high status. At the time of the last inspection, there were no co-ordinators and this has been the case again since last September. This transparent lack of leadership and management means that standards have declined to such an extent that they could not be much lower. Standards in geography and history, which were judged to be in line with expectations at the end of both key stages, have plummeted to very low in geography throughout the school and in history at Key Stage 1. Standards in history at Key Stage 2 are little better, being well below what pupils of the same age achieve nationally. Pupils in Year 6 have poor knowledge and understanding overall in history. They can place the Greeks, Romans, Tudors, Stuarts and Victorians in the correct time sequence, but do not have a well-developed sense of chronology. They muddle one period with another, for instance, asserting that the Victorians threw rubbish out of their windows and that all cars were old in the past.
113. Pupils at both key stages make very poor progress in both subjects as a result of very poor teaching. Teachers have poor subject knowledge, place far too much emphasis on teaching facts and rarely plan lessons aimed at developing pupils' understanding and skills. Lesson plans do not identify what pupils will learn or take the needs of pupils with different interests or attainment into consideration. All too often, younger pupils are expected to colour in worksheets or to copy out the teachers' words. Older pupils also spend too much time completing the same worksheet or copying out. Teachers use reproduced materials without adapting them to the needs of different groups within the same class. Although several worksheets used with pupils in Years 3 and 4 enabled them to look critically at different sources, the teacher had not adapted them and the level of language was too difficult for all but the best readers. Teachers have very low expectations of pupils' ability to think for themselves and accept poor standards of presentation. No critical thought has been given to the ways in which literacy and numeracy could be developed. Although teachers identify specific historical and geographical vocabulary in their plans, they often make no reference to them during the lesson. Consequently, because pupils do not have the words to express their thoughts or to ask questions, most of them do not develop an understanding of new concepts.
114. The school has failed to remedy any of the many weaknesses identified during the last inspection. The urgent need to implement schemes of work and to develop systems for recording pupils' progress has not been addressed. The school has adopted wholesale the nationally recommended schemes for both subjects, without considering how to adapt them to meet the needs of the pupils or the time or resources needed to teach the schemes effectively.
115. Teachers do not have a good understanding of the structure or purpose of the recommended schemes because they have been given a unit to teach, without appreciating the knowledge and skills it builds on or where it leads. For example, the teacher of pupils in Years 1 and 2 had failed to understand that the unit; 'Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?' is intended to be a continuous unit used at various points throughout the key stage to develop pupils' understanding of places both close to home and further afield. The unquestioning adoption of the scheme has also meant that pupils have studied the Tudor period twice for no good reason. Since introducing the new schemes, the school has not considered how it will assess pupils' achievements or progress. There is no way of mapping pupils' skills development in either subject with the consequence that most work set for most pupils is wide of the mark.
116. Senior managers and governors have been unreasonable in expecting teachers to implement these schemes of work with totally inadequate resources, which are frequently out of date or of unsatisfactory quality. In geography, for example, there are no Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, photo packs or video material, little equipment for fieldwork and few atlases, reference books or materials relevant to the topics the school has chosen to study. In history, the picture is just as bleak with a serious lack of artefacts, very few facsimile documents, charts or pictorial materials. Inspectors found very little evidence in lessons, in pupils' written work or in talking to pupils in Year 6 that teachers brought either subject alive. They do not use the locality and visits to places of historical interest effectively to bring relevance to geography and history. This leads to a lack of understanding and motivation. Even when teachers incorporate a visit into

the topic, the potential is not exploited by thorough planning and preparation or by using the visits as a springboard for learning back in the classroom.

117. The school is in no position to begin to implement Curriculum 2000 without improving radically teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in both subjects, greatly improved levels of learning resources and the will to make the curriculum coherent and relevant to the needs of pupils of all ages and attainments.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards of attainment, at the end of both key stages, are very low when compared with national expectations. They have deteriorated since the last inspection because the subject has been neglected for a long time. Until just two weeks before the inspection, there was only one computer in the school. The co-ordinator admits that the pupils have not been receiving their curriculum entitlement and have had very little teaching. Consequently, learning is very poor. Even now, with a computer in each classroom, some pupils are not having enough opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge because some teachers are not making the best use of the computers they have. During the inspection, only the Year 5 and 6 pupils were seen to be using computers.
119. In Key Stage 1, the pupils have very limited keyboard skills. With support, a few can use simple programs to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can use basic word processing to present their work. However, their editing skills are not secure because of their lack of practice. A few are learning to combine text and graphics successfully to enhance their work.
120. The pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They enjoy using the computers and showing their work to visitors. They stick at a task until they get it right. This was shown by one pupil in the Year 5 and 6 class who refused to be beaten when he was having difficulty getting the size of his picture right to fit in with the text. Discussion with the oldest pupils showed that they are keen to learn and would welcome more opportunities to use the computers.
121. No direct teaching was seen during the inspection, but the impact of teaching is very poor overall, even though the oldest pupils are now beginning to make satisfactory progress. Teachers do not plan systematically to use information technology throughout the curriculum.
122. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements because the elements of control and modelling are omitted. Leadership and management of the subject are poor. Although the curriculum co-ordinator leads by example within his own classroom, there are no effective procedures in place for monitoring teaching and learning. Strategic planning for the subject is very poor. The governors were aware that the school had only one computer and that this was having a negative impact on pupils' learning, but they did not address the issue until the inspection was imminent. Although the school has invested in new computers recently, there are not enough to meet the pupils' needs. There is no equipment to support control technology or monitoring. Until this is put in place, the curriculum will not meet statutory requirements and the pupils will be denied their full entitlement.

## **MUSIC**

123. Learning is very poor throughout the school. This means that standards are poor at Key Stage 1 and very poor at Key Stage 2. This is due to a very narrow curriculum and poor, or very poor, teaching. Although the quality of singing in one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 was judged to be sound overall, the quality of singing in the Key Stage 1 assembly was poor. Pupils were unable to hold the melody line accurately, sang out of tune, and the tone was poor. Standards of singing observed in the Year 5 and 6 class were appalling. Twenty minutes into the lesson the teacher said,

‘When everyone is ready, I will begin.’ Despite the intervention of a second teacher from time to time, standards of behaviour were totally unacceptable and learning was impossible. When pupils did sing, most made a mockery by deliberately baiting the teacher. The class was out of control. By this point in their schooling most pupils have lost all interest in music. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 said music was boring and one said, ‘We just sing the same song over and over again.’ Pupils could not recall ever writing and performing pieces of their own, or listening to music other than the songs they sang.

124. The bright light in the gloom is the very good teaching provided currently by a visiting teacher for children in the reception class. These pupils responded with great enthusiasm and enjoyment, rose to the challenge, and achieved very sound standards for their age in both singing and rhythmic work. The activities were well matched to their needs and the pace of the lesson was very good. Pupils’ behaviour was exemplary and in marked contrast to their behaviour in other lessons. This lesson showed to good effect what these pupils are capable of when challenged to concentrate and work hard, and when the teacher has a very good understanding of how pupils of this age learn.
125. The leadership and management of the subject are very poor in almost all aspects. Standards and the quality of teaching are very poor by the end of Key Stage 2 because there has been no effective monitoring. Targets for improvement that have been set have not been rigorously pursued. This is despite the fact that to raise standards in music was a key issue in the last report. Quality and standards are significantly worse now than they were at the time of the last inspection, and this is unacceptable.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Standards are poor throughout the school. In the reception and Year 1 class observed, the quality of teaching was very poor. The teaching lacked rigour and poor behaviour and noise were accepted too readily. This prevented any effective learning. Most pupils were able to hop and skip satisfactorily, but their awareness of space and others when moving was poor and there were many bumps. The teacher paid no attention to improving these skills. Pupils increasingly ran out of control despite the fact that there were eventually five adults present. The breakdown of discipline raised concerns of health and safety; one girl left the others and began to climb the rope ladder. In the Year 1 and 2 lesson observed, pupils had below average agility and poor spatial awareness. The quality of teaching was poor due to the poor organisation of activities. The large number of pupils in each group meant that they had to wait too long for turns on the apparatus, and this led to pupils going off task and then to poor behaviour. Learning was poor because pupils were inactive for too long during the lesson.
127. The quality of teaching in the Year 3 and 4 lesson seen was poor. The teacher had difficulty controlling the class. She asked the pupils repeatedly to move into a space, which they ignored and she finally accepted their refusal. A lot of time was wasted in the lesson because pupils grumbled about silly things, such as which group they would go into. When they played hockey they showed low levels of skill and very little spatial awareness, and it was clear that this basic weakness has still not been addressed adequately. The majority lacked the skills of co-ordination to adequately control a hockey stick. The teachers’ assessment at the end was very generous. She told the pupils that they could all control a puck, dribble and shoot, but most could not. There was not enough teaching of these skills during the lesson and, therefore, little prospect that they would improve.
128. The leadership and management of the subject are very poor. Standards and the quality of teaching are now significantly lower than they were at the time of the last inspection because monitoring has lacked rigour and appropriate targets for improvement have not been set. The lack of safety routines was an important issue raised in the last report, and this has still not been addressed. Pupils are still not given opportunities to evaluate their work or shown how to improve, and these weaknesses are having a significant negative impact on learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. The school has made very poor progress since the last inspection, failing to address the unsatisfactory teaching observed in half the lessons seen. Standards have declined markedly at both key stages. In 1997, standards were broadly in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages although progress was only just satisfactory.
130. Learning is now very poor throughout the school and pupils attain very poor standards in relation to the expectations of the agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. There is no written work in pupils' books in Years 1 and 2 and pupils had very little recall of what they had learned. Pupils in Year 6 have little interest in the subject and even less knowledge and understanding. They appreciate the need for friendship and have a very limited knowledge of the purpose of prayer.
131. Pupils' show poor attitudes to learning. Behaviour was very poor in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 because the teacher failed to control the class, even with the support of three other adults. At Key Stage 2, pupils showed a visible lack of enthusiasm when talking to an inspector. Their written work is frequently unfinished and poorly presented. The pace of work is very slow and pupils make very little effort. These poor attitudes are a direct result of very poor teaching.
132. The quality of teaching is very poor throughout the school. Teachers have a poor understanding of the overall content and structure of the syllabus. They use time very badly. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have two 20-minute lessons a week just before lunch. During the inspection, this lesson did not start on time and the teacher spent all but the last five minutes recapping on the previous lesson. As a consequence, the lesson's objectives were not met and nothing worthwhile was achieved. The lack of resources, identified three years ago, places significant limits on the range of methods for teaching and learning and adversely affects learning and motivation. Teachers have not taken account of the procedures in the agreed syllabus for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding. They do not assess pupils' learning and consequently do not know where to pitch their lesson plans. They fail to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and to challenge higher-attaining pupils.
133. The subject makes a very poor contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school does not meet the requirements of the Kent agreed syllabus and fails to accord religious education the status of a core subject. The time allocated to the subject, at both key stages, falls far short of the recommendations of the agreed syllabus. The subject has been poorly led with three different co-ordinators in a short space of time. The recently appointed acting headteacher, who is the new co-ordinator, has no knowledge of the agreed syllabus, having taught previously in Catholic schools. She is not in a strong position to lead developments in the subject with the immediate need to implement the newly revised agreed syllabus. She had been unable to obtain information from teachers about what they planned to teach until prompted during the week of inspection. There are no records of monitoring to check standards, and the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The acting headteacher has not undertaken any monitoring since taking over the responsibility from the last headteacher. No staff development has taken place to address teachers' unsatisfactory subject knowledge and poor understanding of the agreed syllabus. This is a serious situation that needs to be remedied urgently if pupils are to receive their statutory entitlement.