

INSPECTION REPORT

WARREN ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Orpington

LEA area: London Borough of Bromley

Unique reference number: 101627

Headteacher: Mr Clive Davis

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston
8402

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th June 2001

Inspection number: 193342

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Warren Road
Orpington
Kent

Postcode: BR6 6JF

Telephone number: 01689 853798

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Timothy Andrews

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8402	Dr Vivien Johnston	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19798	Mrs Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20760	Mrs Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	
23315	Mrs Irene Green	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
24009	Mrs Mary Hutton		Science Design and Technology Foundation Stage	
2501	Ms Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
21597	Mrs Caroline Robinson	Team inspector	Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Warren Road Primary School is a mixed community school. It is larger than most other primary schools as it has 707 pupils on roll, who come from the residential areas of Orpington. Though the pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, overall their socio-economic circumstances are above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are white, with a small proportion from other ethnic groups. The school has roughly similar proportions of boys and girls overall, though with some variation between year groups. Twenty-two pupils speak English as an additional language, almost all fluently although a few are still learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Their needs are mostly for learning difficulties. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational need. Overall, the attainment of children when they join the school at the start of the reception year is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Standards, and results in the national tests, are well above average at the end of the reception year and Year 2, and above average overall at the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching is good overall, as are the leadership and management of the school. The school has a number of other strengths, including its ethos, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the curriculum, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The context of the school, in terms of the pupils' background and attainment on entry, is favourable, and its cost per pupil is broadly average. Taking account of all these factors, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in the infants and juniors do well academically, particularly in reading, mathematics and science.
- The children in the reception year do very well because of very good teaching and a rich curriculum.
- Pupils are very keen to learn, behave well and their personal development is very good.
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to do very well.
- The school has a strong ethos within which very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher and governors provide very good leadership, and have managed the school's development well.

What could be improved

- A small proportion of the teaching, because the learning activities do not challenge the pupils sufficiently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Its improvement since then is good. All the key issues identified by the last inspection were dealt with purposefully, though with varying success. The provision for children in the reception classes is now very good, and so their attainment is much higher. Planning of the curriculum for the infants and juniors is better, although it is still not taught consistently well. Pupils' work is assessed better, and the use of the assessment information to inform teaching and learning is now satisfactory, although with some aspects that still need improvement. Monitoring now provides useful information on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Other improvements have been carried out, including to the provision for pupils with special educational needs, to the resources and training of staff for teaching information and communication technology (ICT), and to the accommodation. The strengths in the ethos, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and the school's sense of direction have been maintained. The school has good potential for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A*	B	D
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	B	A	B	C

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

The test results at the end of the juniors (Year 6) have varied widely since the last inspection, but the overall trend is of results remaining at about the same level as in 1996, whereas the national trend is rising. In 2000, the overall results were above average compared to schools nationally, and boys and girls did equally well. The results were average compared to similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). In English, the pupils did much less well in writing than in reading. This was not so in the previous year, when overall results for English were in the highest five per cent nationally. The school met its targets for results in 2000. The results went up in 2001, especially in English as the results for writing rose considerably.

At the end of Year 2, the results of the tests and teacher assessments were well above the national average in 2000. Pupils did particularly well in reading. In comparison with similar schools, the results were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Results have been consistently well above average, and occasionally very high. Boys and girls have done well compared with boys' and girls' results nationally.

The attainment of the children in the reception classes is well above average by the end of the year. Their achievement is very good. Overall, the standards attained by the end of Year 2 are also well above average, with strengths in mathematics, science, reading, and speaking and listening. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average overall. They are well above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. The achievement of pupils in the infants and juniors is good in all three subjects. Throughout the school, pupils do less well in writing than in reading because they have had too few opportunities for writing independently and at length. The evidence indicated that pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6 in geography, history and ICT, and in art and design at the end of Year 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It indicated that standards are above the national expectation in art and design at the end of Year 2, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education, and pupils' achievement is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils of all ages enjoy school and are very keen to learn. Their interest in their work makes a strong contribution to their good achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Behaviour is very good in many lessons. Pupils are occasionally restless and inattentive, because of weaknesses in teaching. Lunchtimes are orderly. No pupils have been excluded in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils treat others with courtesy and respect. Most are mature and sensible, and take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is higher than the national average, with no unauthorised absences last year. Punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning were satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, which is similar to the proportion found in many schools. They were good or better in 74 per cent of the lessons, and very good or better in 29 per cent, both of which are higher proportions than in many schools. The most consistently effective teaching was observed in the reception classes. Here, it was very good, and occasionally excellent, in over half of the lessons observed. In the infants, teaching is stronger in Year 2 than in Year 1. In the juniors, no significant differences in the teaching of year groups were found. Teaching is good in English and science, and satisfactory in mathematics. Numeracy skills are taught and developed very well across the curriculum. Literacy skills are developed well, except that some teachers make too much use of worksheets instead of giving pupils opportunities to write independently. Pupils' confidence in reading and writing contributes to their success in learning in other subjects.

In the most effective teaching and learning, well-planned and organised activities interested and challenged the pupils. They worked hard in response to their teachers' high expectations, which were often communicated through probing questioning of the class. Many pupils are confident, independent learners who are quick to understand and make use of the knowledge and skills they are taught. They learn well in whole-class, group and independent activities as they listen attentively and respond thoughtfully.

In the five per cent of lessons in which teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, and in some of those judged satisfactory overall, the main weaknesses were in managing the learning activities, using the time productively, and ensuring that the work was sufficiently demanding for all in the class. As a result, the pupils learned too little as they did not work hard enough, although they were quick to respond when the tasks were suitably challenging. Generally, teachers are more successful in meeting the needs of the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs than in challenging the higher-attainers. Marking and the use of homework are inconsistent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The reception curriculum provides rich experiences across all six areas for learning. The curriculum for the infants and juniors provides a very good range of learning opportunities. The programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers adapt the work so that it meets their needs, and so they participate fully in lessons. They are given very good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The curriculum is adapted as necessary for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, enabling them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Art, music and religious education make strong contributions to all these areas of pupils' development. The school's strong ethos encourages pupils' moral and social development, and pupils have many activities that extend their cultural experience.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school is a caring community in which pupils' well-being, health and safety are promoted well, as is good behaviour. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. The arrangements for assessing pupils' learning are very good in the reception year, and satisfactory in the infants and juniors.
	Satisfactorily. Parents are very supportive of the school, and contribute

How well the school works in partnership with parents	much to their children's learning and the standards they attain. Parents receive useful information from the school. Reports contain information on the work their children have covered, but say too little about what they have done well and what they need to work on to improve.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher is a very good leader who manages the school well. The deputy headteachers work well to implement the school's policies and support teachers. Other staff with management responsibilities generally fulfil their roles well, although not enough is done to ensure consistency in teaching and learning in each year group.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body is very effective, and fulfils its statutory duties conscientiously. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are actively involved in shaping the direction of the school and monitoring its progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. At whole-school level, strategic planning is good. The monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching is satisfactory overall, and staff are aware of what needs to be done to raise standards. The arrangements for teachers' performance management are very good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are good overall, and used well. The principles of best value are applied very well, by comparing the school's performance with other schools and by seeing that value for money is obtained from expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The teaching is good, and their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is approachable. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework that is set. • The information they receive on how well their children are getting on. • The closeness with which the school works with parents. • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with almost all these views. Although the team found that the teaching is good overall, and some is very good, a small proportion is not. Homework is a strength in the reception year through the activity packs, but not thereafter. Inspectors disagree with the criticism of the school's range of extra-curricular activities, which they found to be excellent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall attainment of children when they join the school at the start of the reception year is above average. They have received good preparation for school, through local pre-school provision and their very supportive parents. By the end of the reception year (the foundation stage), standards in all six areas of learning are well above average. Children have exceeded the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. In relation to their attainment on entry, children's achievement is very good in all the areas of learning. High-attaining children do very well as they are constantly being challenged. Children with special educational needs also achieve very well, due to the patient and purposeful support they are given.

2. At the end of Year 2, results in the national tests in English and mathematics were well above the national average in 2000, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils did particularly well in reading, in which half the pupils gained Level 3, which is above the national expectation for that age group (Level 2). They did less well in writing, although these results were also well above the national average. In comparison with schools in similar contexts (based on the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals), the results were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing.

3. Between 1996 and 2000, results in the tests at the end of Year 2 have been consistently well above average, and occasionally very high – that is, in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Reading and writing results were at their highest in 1997, after which they fell slightly. Mathematics results showed a small improvement, in line with the national trend. Boys and girls both did well in comparison with boys' and girls' results nationally. In reading, the gap between boys' and girls' results was less wide than nationally, as boys did comparatively well. Girls did better than boys in writing, as nationally. In mathematics, their results were similar, as nationally. In 2001, the reading and writing results remained at a similar level to the previous year. The results in mathematics rose considerably, especially in the proportion of pupils who attained Level 3.

4. In science, in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or better was above the national average, and the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. Compared with schools in similar contexts, the results were average at Level 2 or better, and above average at Level 3.

5. Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have varied much more widely than those at the end of the infants. In 2000, the results in all three subjects were above average compared to schools nationally. The overall trend is of results remaining at about the same level as in 1996, after reaching their highest point in 1997, whereas national results rose between 1996 and 2000. Science results have improved overall, whereas English and mathematics results for 2000 are slightly lower than those for 1996. However, in 1997 the results in English and mathematics were in the top five per cent nationally, as they were in English in 1999. Although there are some variations from year to year and within subjects, overall there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, compared to boys' and girls' results nationally.

6. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, the results were average overall. They were average in mathematics and science in 2000, but below average in English. Comparing the Year 6 results for 2000 with those of schools in which pupils obtained similar overall results at the end of Year 2 four years earlier, the results in mathematics and science were average but those in English were well below average. The English results were lowered by pupils doing significantly less well in writing than reading.

7. The school's targets for Year 6 results in English, mathematics and science in 2001 were that 93 per cent of pupils would gain Level 4 or higher. These targets were challenging. They

were met in English and exceeded in science, but not met in mathematics. Within English, the results for writing rose significantly. National data is not yet available to compare the school's results with those for schools nationally. The targets for 2002 are also challenging, at 94 per cent gaining Level 4 or higher in English and 92 per cent in mathematics.

8. In English, the standards attained by pupils now in Year 2 are well above average, and the standards attained by pupils now in Year 6 are above average. In both the infants and the juniors, pupils' achievement is good overall. It is very good in the areas of speaking and listening and reading. Pupils in the infants respond to teachers' questions with relevant answers, often at length, explain their own ideas clearly and well, and develop an extensive vocabulary. They learn to read aloud confidently and with good expression. By Year 6, most pupils are very articulate speakers. They have well-developed comprehension skills, and most read widely for pleasure. Some older pupils have extended their range of reading at home to include classic fiction at a much more advanced level of reading than the school provides. Pupils have done less well in writing than in the other areas of English because they have not had enough opportunities to write independently and at length. However, pupils' accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is very good throughout the school, and overall their achievement in writing is satisfactory.

9. In mathematics, the attainment of pupils now in Year 2 is well above average. Their achievement is good. Nearly all pupils see number patterns quickly, and have good strategies for calculations. The attainment of pupils now in Year 6 is also well above average, and their achievement is good. Their standards are higher than the results of the tests in 2000 for several reasons. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year, and the school has made effective use of grouping pupils by their attainment, into mathematics sets. This has provided appropriate challenge for most pupils, and, together with 'booster' classes, has improved their attainment overall. By the end of Year 6, most pupils calculate confidently with very large numbers and have very good mental calculation skills. They add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, decimals, fractions and measurements competently and accurately. They are confident in handling and presenting data, and use mathematical language correctly.

10. In science, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is well above average and their achievement is good. Pupils have very good scientific vocabulary. They make predictions before they start experiments and then record what actually happened. Achievement during the juniors is also good, and the standards attained by the pupils now in Year 6 are well above average. Standards are now higher than the test results because of better teaching as a result of improvements to the science curriculum. As in the infants, pupils' knowledge and investigative work are strengths. Their written conclusions to experiments are expressed fluently and clearly.

11. Standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are similar to those in English and mathematics. Pupils' confidence in reading and writing makes a good contribution to their success in other subjects. They make some appropriate use of ICT in other subjects.

12. The evidence indicated that pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected for their age at the end of Year 2 in geography, history and ICT, and their achievement is satisfactory. It indicated that standards are above the national expectation in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education, and pupils' achievement is good in these subjects.

13. The evidence indicated that pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected for their age at the end of Year 6 in art and design, geography, history and ICT, and their achievement is satisfactory. It indicated that standards are above the national expectation in design and technology, music, physical education and religious education, and pupils' achievement is good in these subjects.

14. High-attaining pupils make generally good progress because they are well motivated, and so their achievement is good overall. However, they are sometimes insufficiently challenged by the work because teachers pay too little attention to ensuring that their needs are met.

15. The achievement of pupils who are fluent speakers of English as an additional language is similar to that of the others in their classes. Those who are learning English do very well because teachers and support assistants are alert to their needs and involve them in lesson activities, making sure that they understand what to do and that the work is adapted as necessary.

16. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are well supported by teachers and assistants. Their needs are identified early. The special needs co-ordinator and class teachers draw up detailed individual educational plans which have clearly-stated, attainable targets to meet those needs. The pupils' progress is monitored throughout the school, and targets are reviewed termly and adjusted as required. Pupils move up or down the special educational needs register as appropriate to their changing needs. Many pupils move completely off the special educational needs register before reaching the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Parents feel that their children like school, and that their behaviour is good. The inspection team agrees that these are strengths of the school.

18. Children in the reception classes are enthusiastic learners and behave very well. They display a great deal of independence, for example when choosing activities and filing their work away. They show awareness and consideration for each other. For example, they wait patiently for others to have their turn in speaking and listening activities, and play together well. They speak confidently and enthusiastically in circle time and other class discussions.

19. Pupils in the infants and juniors also show very good attitudes to their work and other activities. The school has a happy, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. They listen carefully to teachers and each other, speaking confidently and at length when required. In the lessons observed during the inspection, most tried very hard and concentrated well even when the teaching was less effective. The take-up of extra-curricular activities is very high. Pupils with special educational needs also have a positive attitude to their lessons. They work well in class and join in all aspects of the lesson, particularly when classroom assistant or teacher support is given. They are appreciative of this extra help.

20. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. The reception children walk very quietly and calmly from their classrooms to assemblies, lunch and the playground. Older pupils also move around the building sensibly, and listen quietly and respectfully during assemblies. Lunchtimes are well organised and orderly, and pupils' play, although lively, is generally good-natured. No pupils have been excluded from the school for many years, and no oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. Pupils are confident that the occasional bullying incidents will be dealt with effectively. However, some restlessness and inattention were seen in a few lessons, when teachers managed pupils less well and the learning activities were not appropriately matched to the pupils' needs.

21. Pupils are confident and friendly. Relationships and pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils treat each other, the staff and visitors with courtesy and respect. Most pupils are mature and sensible, and take their individual responsibilities seriously. They work well in pairs and small groups. The older pupils are kind and supportive of the younger ones when listening to them read. Since the last inspection, a school council has been founded. This is well organised, and provides a real chance for representatives of pupils in Years 5 and 6 to express their views and make suggestions. These are taken seriously by the staff, and some ideas, such as allowing girls to wear trousers in the winter, have already been accepted and implemented.

22. Attendance is good, with figures higher than the national average. There were no unauthorised absences in the past year. Punctuality is very good, and pupils arrive happily in the mornings. Registers are taken promptly and efficiently at the beginning of each session, with all lessons starting on time. The school's prospectus now includes a report of pupils' attendance figures. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is good overall, as parents said. The most consistently effective teaching was observed in the reception classes, where it was very good or, occasionally, excellent in over half of the lessons observed and good or better in all. In the infants, teaching is strongest in Year 2, where all the teaching was satisfactory or better and three-quarters was good or better. In Year 1, teaching was satisfactory or better in nine-tenths of the lessons, but good or better in only a third of the lessons. In the juniors, no significant difference was found in the effectiveness of teaching of the different year groups. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching was good or better in about three-quarters of the lessons observed, and very good or better in about a quarter, with occasional lessons in which teaching and learning were excellent. Teaching was occasionally unsatisfactory, or had some weaknesses that slowed pupils' learning, in both the infants (mainly in Year 1) and the juniors.

24. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the reception year. Teachers have very high expectations of their own performance as well as of the children's work and behaviour. They plan together regularly to ensure consistency in teaching and that the children in the different classes are given equal opportunities. The excellent planning shows teachers' very thorough knowledge of how young children learn. Teachers know how well all the children are doing because they carry out detailed assessments. This enables them to be clear about what the children need to learn next, and to ensure that they attain the early learning goals for the foundation stage. The children are constantly challenged to think, concentrate and organise themselves. The teaching of literacy and mathematical development is particularly effective. Activities are stimulating, and appropriately adapted to suit all levels of attainment. Teachers deploy their assistants and parent helpers well, and they all have a very positive influence on the children's learning. All adults in the classrooms use praise well to encourage and motivate the children, whose contributions are always valued.

25. In the infants and juniors, the available evidence showed that the quality of teaching and learning are good in English and science. They are satisfactory in mathematics. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour explain why their achievement over time is good, despite the weaknesses in teaching and learning observed in some mathematics lessons. Also, parents have helped their children to do well, through the support they give at home – the inspection team agreed with the parents who commented on this prior to the inspection. It was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching and learning in other subjects because too few lessons were observed.

26. In the most effective teaching, seen in many lessons throughout the school, well-planned and organised activities interested and challenged the pupils. They worked hard in response to their teachers' high expectations, which were often communicated through probing questioning of the class. Many pupils are confident, independent learners who are quick to understand and make use of the knowledge and skills they are taught. They learn well in whole-class, group and independent activities as they listen attentively and respond thoughtfully. Lessons in which the teaching and learning were very good had similar strengths. For example, in an English lesson, Year 2 pupils were given very clear instructions on how to write their own versions of nursery rhymes, with prompts written on the board to refer to as they worked – based on the ideas they suggested in an initial discussion of rhymes they remembered. Their enthusiasm was channelled very sensitively and successfully. They were expected to be independent learners, for example by looking up spellings in their word books instead of asking the teacher. The teacher monitored their progress, and intervened when more stimulus was needed. This motivated all to work hard and feel proud of their success. The work was adapted to challenge

all in the class, including a pupil with a statement of special educational need who was enabled to take a full part in the reading and writing activities.

27. In the five per cent of lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory, and in some of those judged satisfactory overall, the main weaknesses were in managing the learning activities, using lesson time productively, and ensuring that the work was sufficiently demanding for all in the class. As a result, the pupils learned too little as they did not work hard enough, although they were quick to respond when the tasks were suitably challenging. Generally, teachers are more successful in meeting the needs of the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs than in challenging the higher-attainers. Other aspects of teaching that are inconsistent include the quality of marking, some of which is not informative enough about what pupils have done well and how to improve in future, and teachers' use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

28. Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum, and numeracy skills are developed very well. Pupils' confidence in reading and writing contributes well to their success in learning in other subjects. However, teachers miss some opportunities to extend pupils' skills in writing independently because they still rely too heavily on using worksheets as the basis for written work. Teachers give very good emphasis to developing pupils' skills in mental calculations, and pupils use their numeracy skills very effectively in other subjects.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. Teachers have a good understanding of their needs, as identified in their individual educational plans, which they use to help them plan how to adapt the learning activities. They generally ensure that these pupils are fully involved in learning activities. Communication with classroom assistants is often very good, for example through discussing the plans for the lesson, enabling them to provide sensitive and productive support to individuals and small groups. These strengths also enable pupils who are not yet fluent in English to learn well.

30. Some parents raised concerns about the amount of homework that teachers set, usually because the demands on their children are not consistent and too little work is sent home for some. The inspection team found that the use of homework is satisfactory overall, but that it is inconsistent. The activity packs recently introduced for children in the reception classes are excellent. They cover all areas of the foundation stage curriculum, with activities for parents and children to complete at home. However, pupils in the infants have much less to do at home. In the juniors, good use is made of homework for pupils in Year 6, for example in science, but the provision for other pupils is less well thought through.

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

31. The curriculum in the foundation stage is very carefully planned to ensure that every child attains the early learning goals. It is very broad, and provides rich experiences across all of the six learning areas. Very appropriately for this age group, there is particular emphasis on communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and personal and social development. Children with special educational needs are well supported, and the high achievers are suitably challenged. The outside play area has been refurbished very recently. It now provides further learning opportunities for children, and has started to be used as an outdoor classroom. This has improved the opportunities for children's physical development, which had been constrained by the lack of good outside play facilities.

32. The curriculum for the infants and juniors also has a very good range of learning opportunities. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally-agreed syllabus for religious education. The provision for ICT has been improved recently, with the purchase of new computers, the introduction of planning based on national guidance, and the ICT training provided to staff. It is now satisfactory as the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered. However, a remaining weakness is that the school has not planned for the systematic use and development of ICT skills in other subjects, which contributes to some opportunities being missed.

33. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught within their classes, and enabled to join in with all aspects of the curriculum because they are given very good support. Teachers generally adapt the learning tasks to meet their needs, ensuring that they participate fully. A few pupils are occasionally withdrawn from lessons for extra help in literacy or numeracy, individually or in small groups, to enable them to keep up with the rest of the class. The curriculum is also adapted as necessary for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, which enables them to work successfully.

34. Pupils have plenty of encouragement to use their literacy skills in other lessons, but this is not systematically planned for, and so teachers sometimes miss opportunities to build on pupils' learning in English. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed very well in other subjects, as well as in mathematics.

35. The school has very constructive links with the community and with partner schools. These enrich the curriculum, for example by regular visits to places of educational interest in this country and abroad. Each week, a teacher from a nearby specialist language school teaches Spanish to Year 5 and German to Year 6 pupils. These lessons provide an additional challenge, and a very good preparation for secondary education. They also strengthen pupils' awareness and appreciation of European cultures and life styles. Contacts have been established with schools in several countries.

36. Pupils are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities through an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. These include competitive sports fixtures and athletics coaching, music tuition, and many other clubs and meetings. The inspection team does not agree with the parents who expressed the view that the range of activities is a weakness. The school holds annual sports days, and regularly presents musical productions and concerts by the school orchestra and choir – during the inspection, pupils were practising hard for a production of 'The Pied Piper'. Artwork is regularly exhibited in local and national exhibitions and pupils have won many prizes in competitions, including some prestigious national awards. Their success has frequently brought in additional funding and resources, benefiting the whole school. Most parents and members of the community are very supportive and appreciative of the opportunities the school provides. The high-quality opportunities for extra-curricular work make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development and the ethos of the school.

37. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall, with some strengths. It is a current focus for development and spending in the school improvement plan, and a very good start has been made. The school has an established programme of class and school-based activities, including circle time and activities provided by outside agencies that address specific issues – road safety, health education and the misuse of drugs. However the provision is inconsistent, and the school is reviewing the timing and the content of these activities, with parents, subject co-ordinators and advisers.

38. A relative weakness lies in planning the curriculum to ensure that pupils in each year group have equivalent opportunities for success, and that the work builds cumulatively from year to year. In most year groups, the teachers plan together, evaluate the activities and monitor standards with subject leaders, but overall this co-ordination is not consistent or rigorous enough. This contributes to inconsistencies in the curricular provision for classes and some differences between year groups, and to varying depth and coverage of some aspects of the curriculum. Some parents expressed their concerns at the inconsistency in teaching which results.

39. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual development are carefully planned for, across the curriculum and for assemblies. The legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is met. In religious education lessons, pupils reflect on other values and beliefs, and celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year. The school has fostered good links with local churches, with one sponsoring a fellowship award which is presented to two pupils each term. The high quality of displays around the school also enhances pupils' spiritual development.

40. The school has a strong ethos that encourages pupils' moral and social development. Parents feel that their children are helped to become mature and responsible, and the inspection team agrees that this is a strength. Pupils are very aware of the difference between right and wrong. Circle times are used very well to tackle difficult moral and social issues such as bullying, bereavement and the importance of fair play. In the reception classes, the children

learn simple rules and consideration for others. All staff provide good role models to pupils in this area. The very good relationships in the school illustrate the effectiveness of the provision for social development. During lessons, many opportunities for working together in small groups are provided. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for others. For example, older pupils are able to support younger ones through a paired reading scheme. The very effective school council provides very good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility and show initiative.

41. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their cultural development. A good range of visits is provided to art galleries, theatres and historical sites. Through music, pupils are given many opportunities to perform locally. Multi-cultural awareness is promoted very well through links with other schools, such as one in Germany, and the sponsorship of a child in Costa Rica.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Overall, this is a caring school in which the staff get to know the pupils and their families well. This ensures individual pupils' general well-being, and enables staff to monitor pupils' personal development.

43. The school has a detailed policy for health and safety, and carries out regular risk assessments. The premises are very clean, and maintained efficiently by the site officer and caretaker. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with sickness and accidents, with a trained first aid provider always on site. The school has satisfactory arrangements for dealing with child protection issues. However, not all staff have received training in this area recently.

44. Good behaviour is promoted well through a wide system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are very aware of this system and value the stickers and awards they receive for effort, kindness and good work. Lunchtime staff keep note-books to record any concerns in the playground. However, some playground incidents are not logged in these or reported back to class teachers by the playground staff. Although most are minor incidents, pupils and some parents expressed concern that they were not all logged.

45. The academic progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored very well. Termly reviews are carried out, targets modified and new ones set according to need. Teachers regularly monitor the pupils' progress against their targets, and plan lessons accordingly. The statements of pupils with special educational needs are reviewed at the statutory time, and specialist support is provided as appropriate.

46. The procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and improving attendance are very good. Absences are followed up promptly, and the school ensures that parents are aware of the need to send their children to school regularly and on time.

47. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall, with some strengths but also some weaknesses that the school has identified and begun to tackle. Assessment procedures for children in the reception year are very effective in ensuring that tasks and activities meet individual needs. In the infants and juniors, analysis of national test results has been used satisfactorily to identify curricular needs, for example to improve the teaching of writing. In mathematics, pupils in the juniors have been grouped for lessons according to their levels of attainment, based on assessment information. The teachers know their pupils well and assess their learning through observation, but do not always make the best use of assessment information to plan work that challenges high-attaining pupils. A system for recording assessments for the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) has been established, but the records are not updated regularly by all teachers. There is considerable variation in the quality of the records of pupils' reading and the extent to which they are used to guide pupils, especially the high-attainers. Assessment records for the other subjects are not kept at present, although piloting of a new system has just begun. The school has recently begun to make use of a central computerised database to store assessment data from the core

subjects. This information is increasingly used to track trends and, alongside mid-term teacher assessments, to monitor improvement and to target support and extension work as required by individual pupils. However, these assessments are not yet used to identify expectations for standards in other subjects, and to ensure that groups of pupils, such as those who are higher attainers, do as well as they should.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Overall, parents are happy with the education and care the school provides for their children. They feel that the school has a number of strengths and is well led and managed. However, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with communication, particularly regarding their children's progress and the arrangements for homework. The inspection team agrees with parents that aspects of these could be improved, although overall the links between the school and home are satisfactory.

49. Parents support the school very well. Over seventy parents help in classrooms regularly each week, and there are always plenty of extra helpers on outings. A hard-working group of parents and staff run the very successful Parent Teacher Association. This organises frequent fundraising and social events, raising significant amounts of money for the purchase of new resources. The very committed parent governors give up a lot of their free time to visit and support the school as well as providing a useful point of contact for parents.

50. Parents receive satisfactory information from the school through newsletters, general letters and information evenings. Useful procedures are in place for welcoming new parents into the school community. Parents receive helpful curricular information outlining what their children will be learning each term, but the use of homework diaries to communicate with parents on a day-by-day basis is inconsistent. Consultation meetings are held three times a year. Parents have to make appointments to see teachers after the reports are issued in the summer term, although they are welcome to examine their children's work at this time. The reports contain information on the work covered, but too little information on the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and their attainment. The reports also contain two or three general targets for pupils to work towards. Some of these targets use a lot of educational jargon and are not specific enough, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, to enable them to improve further. The school prospectus now contains the attendance information missing at the time of the last inspection. However, the Governor's Annual Report does not meet the requirement to include information on the school's implementation of its last inspection action plan.

51. Parents strive hard to support their children's learning at home and school. They make a strong contribution to their children's good achievement, as was said by parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and in some comments on the questionnaires. When it is provided, homework is well supported by parents, who often add to their children's learning outside school through educational visits and the use of tutors. Parents of pupils on the special educational needs register are invited to discuss and contribute to regular reviews of their children's needs. Parents whose children have a statement of special educational need are fully involved in annual formal reviews of the statements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher is a very good leader whose achievements are well known and highly respected by the staff and members of the local community. He is considered by parents to be approachable and ready to listen to any concerns they might have. They feel that the school is well led and managed, and the inspection team agrees. The school is popular, and is over-subscribed. Its expansion has been managed well. The headteacher has been involved in several major building projects, to accommodate the increasing number of pupils and to improve the existing facilities. The building programme has involved staff, governors and pupils

– everyone has been keen to follow its progress. The school's good quality learning environment and facilities help foster the enthusiasm pupils have for school and learning.

53. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. School improvements and the means to achieve them are thoroughly documented. The school's aims and values underpin the day-to-day work of the staff, resulting in a shared vision for its future success. The key responsibilities of senior staff are clearly expressed in job descriptions, and monitored against performance targets. The deputy headteachers give strong support to the headteacher, and work well to implement the school's policies and support teachers. Some staff with management responsibilities have been more active and successful than others in securing improvements, particularly in leading and managing subjects and ensuring consistency in teaching.

54. The co-ordinator of the foundation stage has been very effective in leading a strong team of teachers and managing the provision for these children. Many improvements have been made since the last inspection. The accommodation is now very good, the curriculum is carefully planned and children's learning is assessed systematically and regularly. Consequently, the children are achieving much better than four years ago, and their attainment has risen. The improvements have led to the provision for the foundation stage becoming a major strength of the school. The co-ordinator and staff continue to strive to raise standards in all areas. For instance, the recently-devised activity packs are outstanding in helping to develop children's learning.

55. The governing body is very effective. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously. They have given very good support throughout the periods of growth and expansion, and helped in securing additional funding. Governors have a good understanding of the school's academic strengths and weakness. This comes in part from the regular programme of visits to the school, and also through formal meetings with the headteacher and other staff with management responsibilities. To gain a better understanding of the academic performance of the school, some governors have attended training in data analysis. This has given them the confidence to ask searching questions, and to form a better understanding of how barriers to learning have been overcome. This knowledge, in addition to informal observations, has enabled the governing body to be actively involved in shaping the direction of the school and in monitoring the progress that has been made.

56. The school has very good arrangements for performance management. Governors have set challenging targets for the headteacher and deputy heads. All staff have performance targets that address identified weaknesses and, to help them take appropriate action, they have a suitable programme of professional development. Opportunities for teacher exchanges to Germany form a valuable addition to the in-service training programme for staff.

57. The support for and monitoring of teaching are sound overall, with some strengths. The monitoring of teaching in reception classes is a strength that has helped to build a strong team, leading to consistently effective teaching and learning. The co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science check pupils' work to ensure that pupils achieve well and that teachers set appropriate and challenging work. They have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and what has to be done to raise standards. They have recently made a good start on these tasks. This is contributing to the improved standards now being attained by pupils in the juniors in science and mathematics, and to this year's improvement in results in writing in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Newly-qualified teachers have benefited from very good support. However, the school has not established a formal induction programme and regular monitoring and support for other staff who are new to the school. Senior staff recognise this as a weakness, especially as the number of teachers and learning support assistants is increasing.

58. Teachers' expectations of the role of year leaders vary, and there are inconsistencies in the way it is carried out. For example, year leaders see the planning for the classes in their year groups, but some do not take an active role in ensuring that the teachers plan together effectively. The role does not include an expectation that year leaders will monitor the

implementation of the planning and the school's policies. This contributes to the variations in the quality of teaching that parents commented on prior to the inspection. Consequently, the school has not ensured that all pupils have an equal chance of achieving their potential.

59. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. The co-ordinator takes a lead role in drawing up pupils' individual educational plans, carefully tracks the progress of every pupil on the special educational needs register, and ensures that the very good provision is adapted to meet pupils' changing needs.

60. Strategic planning for the school's improvement is good. Carefully detailed planning and budgeting has enabled spending to be targeted wisely. Systems for financial management are very effective. They enable the school to function efficiently and the headteacher and governors to plan strategically to achieve their management objectives. Information is very well presented and regularly up-dated. The school has set itself appropriate priorities for development. For example, ICT was an area that had been under-resourced, and where standards were considered lower than they ought to be. A recent purchase of computers and a planned programme of staff training have enabled teaching and learning to be improved, raising pupils' achievement. A current priority is to improve standards in writing, and appropriate action is being taken.

61. The development and improvement plan provides a very wide picture of the school's financial priorities and its development activities for improving the site and resources. Raising academic standards is a priority for all staff, and forms the major part of annual performance reviews. It is also central to the curriculum improvement plan, although in the body of the plan the impact on academic standards is implied rather than made explicit, making progress difficult to track.

62. The headteacher and governors are very aware of, and apply, best value principles when reviewing the impact of their spending decisions. For example, they regularly compare the school's performance with other schools of similar size and academic intake, and use the information in their planning and target setting.

63. Overall the staffing, accommodation and resources are good. The staff are a hard-working and dedicated team. Teachers give generously of their time for the benefit of the pupils, for example by offering many extra-curricular activities. They are supported in their work by a dedicated team of administrative and ancillary staff. The accommodation is good overall with excellence in its grounds, buildings, the displays and the general state of repair and cleanliness – all of which make a very positive contribution to the school ethos. The weaknesses are in the library, which in its current location and condition does not promote an interest in books, and in the small size of some classrooms, which restricts group work and some practical activities. A new, purpose-built library is to open in September 2001, but in the meantime older pupils use the local library in preference to the school library because many of its books are old and shabby. The library resources have been catalogued using a computer program. A good feature is that this information is on the school network and so pupils and staff can find out what resources the library holds on a given topic. In other areas, the school is well resourced. Equipment and resources are accessible to pupils and staff, and are generally of good quality.

64. The school responded purposefully to the points for action identified by the previous inspection report, leading to good overall improvement. Provision for the reception year has been significantly improved, giving the children a very good start to their formal education. Planning of the curriculum for the infants and juniors is better, although it is still not taught consistently effectively. Pupils' work is assessed better. The use of the assessment information to inform teaching and learning is now satisfactory, although not consistent across the school. Monitoring now provides useful information on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, and so the school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Other improvements have been carried out, including to the provision for pupils with special educational needs, to the resources and staff expertise in teaching ICT, and to the accommodation. The strengths in the ethos, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and the school's sense of direction have been maintained.

The school has good potential for further improvement as the staff are committed to it and the school has the policies and systems needed to bring it about.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To raise standards further, and ensure that pupils in all classes have equal opportunities to do well, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- improve the weaknesses identified in some teaching, so that it enables all pupils to do well [*paragraphs 27, 28, 30, 83, 88, 90, 98, 100, 110, 126, 130*]. This will involve:
 - planning work that is appropriately matched to the range of needs of the pupils in each class, so that all, including the higher attainers, are sufficiently challenged by the learning activities;
 - managing the learning activities more effectively, including making more purposeful use of time, so that pupils work harder and more productively;
 - giving pupils more opportunities for independent writing, by reducing the reliance on worksheets as a basis for their written work, in English and other subjects;
 - providing better information on how well pupils are doing, through marking their work more informatively;
 - making better use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

66. Other, minor points that the governing body may wish to include in their Action Plan were identified by the inspection. The school has already identified these issues as areas for development, and has started to tackle them. They are to:

- record assessment information more systematically and consistently, and make more use of it to track pupils' progress and to ensure that pupils in all classes make the progress they should [*paragraph 47*];
- plan for the consistent development of pupils' skills in literacy and ICT in other subjects [*paragraphs 32, 34, 88, 136*];
- strengthen the co-ordination of the work of the classes in each year group in the infants and juniors [*paragraphs 38, 58*];
- make reports to parents more informative about the strengths and weaknesses in their children's learning [*paragraph 50*];
- provide a programme of induction for staff new to the school, and training in child protection issues for staff who have not had it recently [*paragraphs 43, 57*];
- report annually to parents on the implementation of the action plan drawn up following the inspection [*paragraph 50*].

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

102

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	25	45	21	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	707
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	111

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
	2000	53	43	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	50	47	53
	Girls	42	40	43
	Total	92	87	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (99)	91 (98)	100 (99)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	48	51
	Girls	40	41	42
	Total	86	89	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (99)	93 (96)	97 (99)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	48	47	95

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	37	47
	Girls	42	44	45
	Total	85	81	92
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (88)	85 (87)	97 (91)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	40	48
	Girls	42	41	42
	Total	81	81	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (92)	85 (91)	95 (96)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	19
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	678
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	193

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	1,227,114
Total expenditure	1,233,110
Expenditure per pupil	1,858
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,016
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,980

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	707
Number of questionnaires returned	460

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	51	9	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	57	4	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	52	20	4	1
The teaching is good.	41	53	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	46	25	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	6	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	42	24	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	52	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	45	16	3	7

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents contribute to their children attaining high standards by the support they give them at home.

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

67. Children enter the reception year (the foundation stage) in September or January, depending on their birthdate. The overall attainment of children when they join the school is above average compared with what is expected nationally. They have received good preparation for school, through local pre-school provision and their very supportive parents. By the end of the reception year, standards in all six areas of learning are well above average as children exceed the early learning goals. Children's achievement in relation to their prior attainment is very good in all the areas for learning. Higher-attaining children do very well as they are constantly being challenged. Children with special educational needs also achieve very well, due to the patient and purposeful support they are given.

68. Teaching is very good in all the areas of learning for the foundation stage. Teachers have very high expectations of the children's work and behaviour. Children are constantly challenged to think, concentrate and organise themselves independently in practical activities. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are particularly effective. There is an appropriate emphasis on children's personal and social development. Teachers deploy the classroom assistants and the many valuable parent helpers very well, to enrich children's learning opportunities. Teachers plan together regularly to ensure consistent provision for the children in the different classes. Their many detailed assessments in all the areas of learning enable them to track the achievement of every child systematically. The high standard of the activity packs, which cover all the areas of learning with activities for children to complete at home, is an outstanding provision.

69. The provision for the foundation stage is now a major strength of the school. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. The capacity for further improvement is very good because the foundation stage is led and managed very effectively. The recently-refurbished outside play area now provides very good learning opportunities for children. It has begun to be used as an outdoor classroom very recently, enabling the provision for children's physical development to be improved.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Children develop into mature and independent learners due to the very good teaching and well-directed support they receive. Children's attitudes to learning are very positive. They are confident and eager to participate in all activities. They show a great deal of independence when choosing activities and filing their work. Their enthusiasm was seen during parachute games, when children learned social skills such as knowing how to take turns. They concentrate very well, and happily remain on task. They are totally involved in an activity until it is finished, for example when they were creating repeating patterns for plates and mats. Children have very good relationships with each other, with teachers and the other adults who assist in the classroom and make an important contribution to their learning. Children demonstrate well-developed personal skills, for example when changing quickly and arranging their clothes tidily before physical education lessons. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, as a result of well-established routines and expectations. Children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered well through activities such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year and the Christmas nativity. Children take part in whole-school assemblies, and respond well to the hymns and prayers. Staff show a deep understanding of the emotional needs of young children, in their effective use of praise to encourage self-esteem and higher achievement.

Communication, language and literacy

71. The development of children's language skills is a high priority. During the carefully-planned literacy lessons, pupils listen very attentively to stories and rhymes, and express

themselves clearly. They also develop language skills in other areas of the curriculum. This was well illustrated in a mathematical activity, when the children described the distinguishing features of the two- and three-dimensional shapes they could name. Children's achievement in reading is very good. They clearly value books, and gain enjoyment from them. All children are monitored individually reading the books that have already been shared together as a class or group, as well as in reading books from the scheme. Children have a very good knowledge of phonics. The older children read fluently, correcting their own mistakes.

72. Children are given very good opportunities to write. For example, after the teacher read 'The Monster Party', children imagined and wrote about their own monster and designed their own party invitations. They write stories in small books, and have written the life cycle of the butterfly in zigzag books. Their work is neat and the letters are correctly formed. All the children have learned to write at least one sentence. The higher attainers complete two or three sentences unaided, with the majority of spellings correct. In one classroom, the teacher has provided a writing table to encourage the older children to practise their writing skills independently.

Mathematical development

73. The first part of mathematics lessons is based on the national numeracy guidance, and involves children in a wide range of activities. These include adding, subtracting and doubling numbers up to ten, and up to twenty for the higher-attaining children. Teachers are skilled at directing their questions to the learning needs of individual children. A number line without numbers is used very effectively to develop children's thinking skills. Children use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary. For example, they know that 'zero', 'nought' and 'nothing' mean the same thing. In lining up six vehicles, children knew that the vehicle at the end was both the 'last' and the 'sixth', as both words described the same position. The children have a good knowledge of shapes. They know cubes, cuboids, cylinders, cones and pyramids, and several gave examples such as that a football is a sphere. Children are also good at noticing patterns. After practising making repeating patterns with a range of materials, the children made necklaces that included repeated colours as well as different-sized beads. When the younger children used real pennies to pretend to buy priced toys, they were successfully developing their understanding of 'more', 'less', 'enough', 'expensive' and 'cheapest'. Children have begun to learn about collecting information to make a pictorial representation, through making a graph about who likes oranges and lemons. They carry out tasks with water and sand, developing their understanding of capacity. They are familiar with counting songs, rhymes and number games, which are an enjoyable way for them to reinforce their understanding of number. This also applies to the homework packs, which include activities that promote the children's mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children are provided with interesting and stimulating experiences to develop their learning in this area. In cooking sessions, children find out what happens to materials when they are heated and cooled. Some children made jelly, and the session made a significant contribution to their language development. They described the look and smell of the jelly, and showed that they understood the meaning of 'dissolve' and 'set'. In studying living things, children have learned that tadpoles become frogs and caterpillars turn into butterflies, by observing them in the classroom. Teachers have made good use of the school's nature reserve to encourage children to consider the importance of returning living things to their natural environment. They understand that creatures need looking after. This knowledge was reinforced during a visit by a live tortoise called Speedy. Children made detailed drawings of him, showing the pattern on his shell. They have also looked at other patterns in nature, such as when they used a hand lens to view seashells.

75. Children use appropriate cutting and joining skills confidently, and have worked with recyclable materials to produce models of a high standard, such as an aeroplane. Some children constructed carts, and learned the importance of fixing the axles to support the wheels before testing them in the outside area. Children use computers and a programmable toy regularly. When using an art program to make shape pictures, they successfully used the mouse to select brush size, colour and direction. They have developed a sense of the passing of time, by drawing and writing about themselves as babies and toddlers, and to imagine themselves when grown up. They describe and paint what they see on their way to school, such as the postman, a letterbox and a zebra crossing. They drew a map of the school's nature reserve and wrote about the features they liked and disliked.

Physical development

76. Children run, jump and climb with confidence. During a physical education lesson observed during the inspection, children showed that they had developed an excellent awareness of space and direction. They felt their hearts beating before and after they used apparatus, and recognised that exercise had increased the rate. Children use a good range of construction toys of all sizes purposefully, and have the opportunity to build very large models. They play safely in the outside area, climbing and balancing on the apparatus as well as using the house and train for imaginative play. They learn to avoid collisions when using the wheeled toys.

77. Children have many and varied opportunities to practise and develop their skills in using small objects, through writing, painting, using scissors and clay. For example, children were observed cutting paper shapes very accurately in a mathematics lesson. They skilfully used plasticine to model small detailed gardens on a plate, and showed good control when fixing the wheels of their model carts. Children demonstrated an awareness of foods which keep them healthy when they were naming foods beginning with 'm' in a literacy lesson. They washed their hands carefully before sampling the food they made for a party session.

Creative development

78. The rich provision for this area enables children to develop their creative skills very well. Children use a wide range of materials, as was seen in their work on the Chinese New Year. Their work on display indicated a very good level of observational, imaginative and artistic skills. The watercolour scenes children painted after visiting the nature reserve captured the quietness of the area. The younger children's self portraits show good brush control and ability to mix colours. The children's abstract paintings, inspired by Mondrian, are dramatic in their effect. Children showed imaginative individual style in their computer-generated flower pictures, by using pastels and crayons to enhance the printouts. Children looked at circles in the environment during a mathematics lesson, which resulted in some careful printing of circles. Literacy lessons also influence art work. For example, after reading the story about Elmer the elephant, children painted pictures of her colourful patches, having first designed them on the computer. The book 'Funny Bones', together with a life-size model of a human skeleton, encouraged the children to produce some creative art work as well as some good language work.

79. Children enjoy making music, and regularly sing songs and rhymes as part of their daily routine. Themed role-play areas are provided in each classroom, such as a shoe shop and doctor's waiting room. These are carefully planned to provide many opportunities for language and mathematical development, as well as stimulating children's imagination as they play at being in the estate agent's office or eating in the cafe.

ENGLISH

80. In the tests at the end of Year 2 in 2000, results in reading were well above both the national average and that of similar schools. Half the pupils gained Level 3, which is above the national expectation of Level 2. Results in writing were well above the national average, and above the average for similar schools. The overall results went up after the last inspection. They were at their highest in 1997, but since then they have gradually returned to being similar to the 1996 results reported by the last inspection, whereas the national trend is of a small rise.

81. At the end of Year 6, results in English were above the national average in 2000, and met the school's target. However, the results were below average in comparison with similar schools, and were significantly lower in writing than in reading. Results have fluctuated widely from year to year. They rose sharply after the last inspection, to their highest point in 1997. The 2000 results were close to those for 1996, whereas the national trend is of a steady improvement. The overall results improved in 2001 because pupils did better in writing than in the previous year, enabling the school to meet its target of 93 per cent of pupils gaining Level 4 or better.

82. As nationally, girls have done better than boys in the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. Comparing their results with those of girls and boys nationally shows that the difference between their results is broadly similar to that nationally, although boys did comparatively well in reading in the Year 2 tests.

83. The standards attained in English by pupils now in Year 2 are well above average. They are above average for the pupils now in Year 6, although higher in reading and in speaking and listening than in writing. In both the infants and the juniors, pupils' achievement is good overall. It is very good in the areas of reading, speaking and listening. Although their achievement is good in writing, pupils still do less well in this area of English because they have too few opportunities for writing independently and at length. This especially affects the standards attained by the higher attainers, and is the reason why standards at the end of Year 6 are not as high as at the end of Year 2. Pupils of all ages do well because of good teaching, their very positive attitudes towards learning in English, and the very good support they receive at home.

84. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good in all areas of the English curriculum. They are given good support and encouragement, by both class teachers and support assistants, and the work they are set is generally well matched to their needs. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language also benefit from well-targeted support and guidance, and so their progress is also very good.

85. **Speaking and listening** Pupils in the infants respond to teachers' questions with relevant answers, often at length. They explain their own ideas clearly and well, and develop an extensive vocabulary. In the juniors, pupils speak out confidently. They answer teachers' questions clearly and thoughtfully, in English and other subjects. They listen attentively to other pupils as well as to their teachers. For example, pupils in Year 5 listened courteously and without interruption during a debate about the rights of North American Indians to retain control of their lands. They had a mature manner, and used persuasive language well to present their well-thought-out arguments. Pupils also showed a very good ability to switch into playing a role. By Year 6, most pupils are very articulate speakers.

86. **Reading** Pupils in the infants, including those with special educational needs, have well-developed phonic skills and use them confidently to decode words. They learn to read aloud confidently and with good expression. Even the youngest pupils express strong preferences for the types of books they like, and can name their favourite authors. Most pupils in Year 2 can describe the plot and characters of stories. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils take books from school as homework, although some lower attainers do not always remember to read them. Higher-attaining pupils read widely, both at school and at home. Most pupils in the juniors also read widely for pleasure, and many use the local library regularly. Some older pupils have extended their range of reading at home to include classic fiction such as 'Jane Eyre'. This shows a much more advanced level of reading than the school provides. The recent introduction of reading diaries has helped parents to be more involved with developing their children's reading, and the Reading Passport Award system has encouraged

some pupils to extend their reading habits. Pupils comment with understanding on the characters and the events of a plot, and make well-founded predictions of what may happen next. Pupils of all levels of attainment know how to use the Dewey system to locate a reference book.

87. **Writing** Standards and pupils' achievement in writing are satisfactory, but lower than in the other areas of English because of some teachers' over-use of worksheets as the basis for writing activities. However, pupils' accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is very good throughout the school. Some of the younger pupils in the infants have written their own 'books' neatly, retelling stories such as Goldilocks and the three bears, and illustrating them carefully. The higher attainers in Year 2 write fluently and imaginatively. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in writing, as by the end of Year 2 they have progressed to writing coherent short stories. Pupils in the juniors write successfully for a variety of audiences and purposes, including formal and informal letters. They have learned to use the appropriate form of address and to write in a suitable style. They plan the structure of their stories and aspects of their characters effectively. In the limited opportunities they have for extended creative writing, older pupils successfully organise their stories into paragraphs. They set the scene for their stories in a manner which holds the reader's attention. Pupils' handwriting is generally neat. During Years 2 and 3, most pupils learn to use a clearly formed, cursive style, although even in Year 6 most work is still written in pencil.

88. **Literacy across the curriculum** Pupils' confidence in reading and writing contributes well to their success in learning in other subjects. They have plenty of encouragement to use their literacy skills in other lessons, but this is not systematically planned and so teachers sometimes miss opportunities to build on pupils' learning in English. For example, in some classes pupils' written work in history and geography is based too much on completing worksheets, instead of composing their own written accounts. However, pupils' written work showed several good examples of teaching that promoted literacy in other subjects. For instance in geography, Year 5 pupils interviewed various members of the public about the pedestrianisation of Orpington, and wrote letters to businesses about the proposal. They wrote up the results of their survey very clearly. Pupils read for information in research activities in history, and they make careful notes and label diagrams clearly in science and design and technology.

89. Teaching and learning are good in English, an improvement since the last inspection. Strengths in teaching include good planning and the effective use of a wide range of strategies. Most teachers show good subject knowledge, for example in the way they question pupils. Usually, the tasks are suitably adapted to extend all, including pupils with special educational needs and high attainers. This contributes to pupils' very positive attitudes towards English and the literacy hour. They are aware of their learning targets and work positively to achieve them. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other, particularly during whole-class shared reading and word-level work. They speak out confidently, and participate in debate in a mature and controlled manner. They work well in paired and group activities, and settle to individual tasks quickly and quietly. They concentrate well and persevere with their work.

90. The teaching of reading is a strength. Phonic skills are well taught in the infants, and pupils' reading and comprehension skills are extended in the juniors by the use of challenging texts. The teaching of writing skills is good with regard to sentence structure, including punctuation. However, teachers' over-reliance on using worksheets as a basis for writing activities limits the learning of higher attainers, particularly in the infants. The setting of homework varies too much from class to class, and insufficient use is made of it. In the infants, reading is the normal homework, whilst for the juniors it is spelling, together with occasional research for projects. Teachers assess pupils' work well and plan their lessons accordingly. They generally mark pupils' work constructively, which results in useful dialogue to improve the work.

91. Pupils who are gifted and talented make good progress, but are sometimes not challenged enough for example in writing. Pupils of all ages and attainment also do well because they are given much support and encouragement at home.

92. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory overall, with some strengths. The subject co-ordinator has produced a very good resource file for each term, for each year group, together with guides to help teachers improve aspects of English that need further development, such as structure of stories and character descriptions. In support of the school's priority to raise standards in writing, a number of initiatives have recently been introduced. These include individual targets to help pupils improve their writing, extra support classes in Year 5, and a focus on guided writing during the literacy hour. These have helped to raise the results in the tests at the end of Year 6. However, the over-use of worksheets has not been dealt with yet, and planning does not ensure that the different classes in each year group have equal opportunities, particularly in writing. Resources for English are good within classrooms.

93. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The literacy hour has been introduced successfully. Teaching is better, particularly in reading. However, standards are similar to those reported by the last inspection, except for the weakness in writing in the juniors. Results in the tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 remain well above average, but overall test results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated widely from 1996 to 2000 and did not rise in line with the national trend, although they improved in 2001.

MATHEMATICS

94. From 1997 to 2000, results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average compared to all schools nationally, and also well above the average for similar schools. Boys' and girls' results have been similar, as nationally. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of the pupils now in Year 2 is also well above average. Nearly all the pupils see number patterns quickly, and have good strategies for calculations. They use these skills well in, for example, continuing a sequence or doubling and halving numbers. For example, Year 2 pupils mentally 'doubled 88' in a few seconds without any difficulty. In the infants, pupils' work shows good achievement, with strengths in using and applying what they have already learned in new contexts.

95. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are slightly lower than in 1996. They rose sharply in 1997, the year after the last inspection, to being in the top five per cent nationally. Since then, the results show a downward trend, and were above average in 2000. These results were broadly in line with the average for schools in similar contexts. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In 2001, the proportion gaining Level 4 or better rose slightly, to 88 per cent, which was below the target of 93 per cent.

96. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of pupils now in Year 6 is well above average and their achievement is good. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year, and the school has made effective use of grouping pupils by their attainment, into mathematics sets. This has provided appropriate challenge for most pupils, and, together with 'booster' classes, has improved their attainment overall. By the end of Year 6, most pupils calculate confidently with very large numbers and have very good mental calculation skills. They add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, decimals, fractions and measurements competently and accurately. They sort data, finding the median, mode and mean from a set, and are confident in handling and presenting data, for example using Excel to produce graphs and pie charts. They use mathematical language correctly. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are well supported by teachers and assistants. Work is modified to match their ability, and teachers ensure that they are fully included in oral sessions. The progress of very high-attaining pupils is not always given the same emphasis. Whilst these pupils are given tasks to extend their investigational and thinking skills, they are not always taught the next mathematical steps to help them move on. Their achievement is good overall, however.

97. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed very well in mathematics and other subjects. Very good emphasis is given to developing mental calculation skills in mathematics lessons. Pupils use numeracy skills very effectively in other subjects, for example weighing and measuring

ingredients in cookery, preparing graphs in ICT, and conducting surveys in geography such as to find out about the speed of vehicles outside the school.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the infants, the proportions of satisfactory and good teaching observed were roughly equal, but there was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching and learning were good, teachers started the lesson by explaining clearly what they intended pupils to learn, and they used the last part of the lesson to assess how successful pupils had been. Teachers provided further reinforcement of the teaching points where necessary during the lesson, explaining things in small steps to ensure that pupils understood fully. Written work supported and consolidated what had been taught and learned. Where teaching was less successful, and occasionally unsatisfactory, pupils became confused about the work. This was largely due to the lack of clarity in some teachers' lesson planning, which meant that their explanations were also unclear. Pupils are very keen learners, but were frustrated by the slow pace of these lessons and by the missed opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. They were allowed to talk too much, and so noise levels rose as pupils' concentration lessened.

99. Teaching and learning in the juniors varied from very good to unsatisfactory, with most being satisfactory. In the very best teaching, written planning was clear and sufficiently detailed to ensure that both teacher and pupils were fully focused on what they were expected to learn. This led to a high level of pupil involvement, and time was used effectively. Teachers showed confidence in the subject and were well prepared to deal with pupils' questions and misconceptions, and to take unexpected opportunities to revise and extend their learning. For instance, Year 6 pupils who responded with unmathematical language were told to use the correct terminology, for example 'denominator' not 'number at the bottom'. All teachers place strong emphasis on mental mathematics and discussing different strategies for calculations.

100. Weaknesses in teaching and learning were mainly due to unsatisfactory use of the time available. Sometimes the oral part of the lesson went on too long and pupils had insufficient time to complete written tasks, or teachers did not set time limits for independent work and so pupils worked with little sense of urgency. In a lesson with older pupils, learning was slowed down by the routine expectation for all pupils to complete the written work in their own books. As they started the task, it was clear that they were highly motivated as they worked collaboratively to sort out difficulties or to compare methods. They would have learned more in a shorter space of time if they had been advised to work in pairs, using a rough piece of paper, with a set time limit for completion. The use of homework is inconsistent in the juniors, and does not have a significant impact on supporting and extending pupils' learning.

101. Pupils respond enthusiastically during mathematics lessons, and do well in all areas of the subject because they apply what they know effectively and are keen to learn and do well. Their good attitudes and behaviour explain why their achievement over time is good, despite the weaknesses in teaching and learning observed in some lessons.

102. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has been successful in working with parents to show them how mathematics is taught in the school, and why areas such as mental mathematics have such a strong priority. This has further enhanced the already good support which parents give their children. Teachers' assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is satisfactory. The school has used national test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, but has only just started to use detailed analysis of assessments to ensure that standards of attainment are as high as they should be. The school has a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for further development in mathematics. For example, it acknowledges the need for greater and more effective use of ICT.

103. Overall, the improvement in mathematics is good. Standards of attainment are now higher than reported by the last inspection. The school has made significant improvement in pupils' skills in mental mathematics, which was a weakness four years ago. There is more direct teaching of pupils, due to the introduction of the national numeracy strategy and the reduced reliance on a commercial scheme for planning, teaching and assessment.

SCIENCE

104. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or better was above the national average, and the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, results were average at Level 2 or better, and above average at Level 3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average in 2000. Compared with similar schools, the results were average. The trend in results is of a slight improvement since the last inspection, though they have varied considerably and the rate of improvement is lower than nationally. Boys' and girls' results have been broadly similar in the Year 6 tests.

105. Pupils start Year 1 with a very good knowledge and understanding of the world, gained from their learning in the reception year and from their experiences at home. Their attainment is well above average at the end of Year 2, and their achievement is good. Pupils in Year 2 have learned about the difference between frogs and newts, after visiting the school's nature reserve area. They understand the importance of nettles for the survival of ladybirds and butterflies. They have very good scientific vocabulary. For example, they know the meaning of words such as 'nocturnal' and 'diurnal' when used to describe the similarities and differences between plants and animals. The good emphasis on investigative work gives pupils first-hand experience on which to draw. This was seen when pupils studying light sources answered questions on which materials make good reflectors. Pupils make predictions before they start their experiments and then record what actually happened. For example, Year 1 pupils used the skills learned in their numeracy lessons to measure how far they could hear different sounds. Pupils have also drawn charts based on the information they recorded in a food diary, and have made graphs about electricity in the home. Some pupils have used a computer to record their findings.

106. The attainment of pupils now in Year 6 is well above average. Standards are higher than last year's test results because of recent improvements to the science curriculum, which have led to better teaching and learning. Pupils' achievement during the juniors is good. Pupils in a Year 3 class have recorded their investigations in a particularly clear way, deepening their scientific thinking as well as developing their literacy skills. By Year 4, pupils know how to make an investigation a fair test. Year 5 pupils know that water changes its state from liquid to gas, and use terms such as 'evaporate' and 'water vapour' correctly. As a result of their experiments, they have learned that moving air makes water evaporate quicker than still air. They were quick to recognise that the introduction of a variable affects the fairness of a test. Year 6 pupils have good scientific knowledge. For example, they know how to build an electric circuit using batteries, and how to alter the brightness of bulbs. They are used to making predictions before carrying out an investigation, and to discussing their findings with each other. Their written conclusions to their experiments are expressed fluently and clearly. Pupils carry out some investigations and research at home, which helps their learning at school.

107. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because the work is usually matched well to their needs. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well, although they are not always challenged with tasks set specifically for them.

108. Pupils apply their numeracy and literacy skills well in science work. A good example of this was seen in the series of investigations into pulse and breathing rates. Pupils in Year 5 produced a pulse-rate database, using the terms 'range' and 'mode', and accurately plotted a line graph to display the information gathered. Many pupils also practise their art skills to a high standard, as they produce very careful drawings to illustrate their work. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use their ICT skills in science work, nor to use graph paper to record their findings.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In over half the lessons seen, the teaching was good or very good. Teachers often had good introductions to their lessons.

Through questioning, they assessed pupils' recall and understanding of the work covered in previous lessons, and introduced the new work making sure that pupils were clear about what they were expected to learn. In the very good lessons, teachers' questioning probed the pupils' knowledge and understanding, encouraging them to think as scientists. Teachers were quick to use pupils' questions and comments to extend their learning. Teachers' class management was very good, which meant that lessons had a very good pace. In a Year 2 class, recording sheets at different levels of difficulty meant that pupils who were slower at writing were not held up in recording their science findings. The very good lessons were very well planned and organised. While the pupils were carrying out the practical part of the lesson, the teacher joined in with groups to listen to their collaborative discussions and extend their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were devising their own questions for their individual recording chart about micro-organisms. The teacher asked them why they had put samples in plastic bags and what would happen if they opened them. In addition teachers used the summary sessions very well to check pupils' learning. The high standard of teachers' displays promotes pupils' learning by showing others' achievements. Also, teachers write labels that include questions for the pupils to answer and activities for them to do.

110. In a few lessons, the teaching had weaknesses although it was judged satisfactory overall, or was unsatisfactory. This was often because the pupils' learning was not managed effectively because the teachers were insufficiently well planned and organised. For example, when teachers spent some time busily giving out equipment themselves, pupils became bored because they were not involved. Sometimes, teachers did not notice when the pupils lost concentration and started to become noisy or to misbehave. Occasionally, teachers interrupted the whole class to regain some pupils' attention. Marking of pupils' work is too variable. Some teachers make comments to help pupils' scientific development, while others simply acknowledge that the work has been completed. The use of homework is consistent in Year 6, where it helps pupils' learning, but not in the rest of the school.

111. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Their enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning contribute much to their good achievement. In many lessons observed, they were totally involved and motivated. They concentrated hard and their behaviour was good. They collaborated very well when given a challenging task. They respected each other's opinions and used the equipment carefully. They asked questions confidently, and knew that the answers and comments they made in discussion would be used in a positive way to extend their learning.

112. The recently-appointed co-ordinator for science has made a good start in leading and managing the subject. She has reviewed the policy and completed an audit of resources. She has checked and found there are no differences in attainment of boys and girls in the school, but has identified areas to be improved in order to raise standards. These include the improved use of ICT, closer year-group planning, and the use of different tasks to challenge the higher-attaining pupils. The school's nature reserve is now a very good educational resource. It is well used, and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in science and in promoting their sense of wonder at the marvels of nature. The school is in a good position to continue the improvement in standards, which is largely due to the consistent use of a new scheme of work throughout the school, with assessments of every topic covered. Overall, the improvement in science since the last inspection is good.

113. In the following subjects, judgements are based mainly on the evidence of pupils' previously-completed work, including that provided in a sample of written work from each year group, and on teachers' planning and other documentation. In most of these subjects, a few lessons were observed and some pupils talked with inspectors about their work. This provided enough evidence to enable the inspection team to make judgements about the standards pupils have attained and their achievement in most subjects, but not about the overall quality of teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Standards in art and design are above the national expectation at the end of Year 2, although they vary between classes. Infant pupils' achievement is good. A visit to the National Portrait Gallery has provided added breadth to the curriculum, and helped pupils to appreciate artwork. For example, some very carefully-observed work of fruits and vegetables was later developed into collages. In discussion, the pupils were able to recognise the links between their work and that of Arcimboldo, and to explain why they found his work clever and funny. Where pupils have been encouraged to look for detail and taught to mix colours, their achievement is particularly good – as in a Year 1 class where self portraits had been painted, and then used as a starting point for a piece of writing. Good links are made between art and design and other subjects. For example, drawing skills were used in science to record the growth of a conker. The best work showed the structure and root growth very well, with delicate colouring of the shoots and leaves.

115. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although with considerable variation between classes. Where pupils have been taught to collect visual and other information and to reflect on their ideas, the quality of their sketchbooks and other work is good. In a Year 3 class, for example, pupils were introduced to the work of Gaudi, Frink and Rodin before they designed a sculpture for the nature garden. Pupils were inventive, keen to experiment with different materials and textured surfaces, and able to reflect on what they had done, to adapt and refine their designs. In some classes, the skills of critical analysis have been taught well. The standard of work in these pupils' sketchbooks is very high, and shows considerable improvement on the work completed earlier in the year.

116. Teaching and learning were satisfactory or better in all the art lessons observed, and occasionally they were good. Teachers managed pupils' behaviour well and instilled positive attitudes. Pupils who were taught new skills made good progress, whilst others were frustrated by their inability to realise their ideas. Pupils enjoyed art lessons, showed respect for others' work, and tried hard – even in cramped classrooms where the opportunities for large-scale work were limited. However, teachers' expertise and confidence in the subject vary. Their expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. As a result, the quality of artwork varies widely between classes.

117. The quality of display in the school is excellent, making a significant contribution to the school ethos and to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils have won numerous prestigious awards for their artwork in both local and national competitions. Most recently, out of over 35,000 entries, a pupil has been awarded the Artworks 2001 prize in a presentation at the Tate Modern Gallery.

118. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Art and design is now very well led. The co-ordinator has done much to raise standards and to provide individual help to groups of pupils, including some who are gifted and talented. The areas identified for future development, to improve and extend the use of ICT and the quality of work in sketchbooks, reflect the findings of the inspection. The challenge is to ensure that all pupils achieve well and have an equal chance of success, through more consistent teaching.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Inspection evidence from looking at previously-completed work and talking to pupils indicates that overall they reach standards above those expected for their ages at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all ages achieve well. This is due to the introduction of a scheme of work which is being used consistently. It gives support to teachers, and ensures that every term pupils carry out projects that are developing their skills systematically, often with good links to other subjects.

120. Year 1 pupils have successfully used their skills in cutting and joining to make a flower move as if growing out of the pot, in connection with a moving pictures project. Pupils assembled and shaped materials to make large telephones to a high standard, showing different designs from the past. Year 2 pupils have constructed wheeled vehicles very carefully. They made very accurate measurements, and used a variety of materials. Infant pupils regularly use the food technology room with the help of parent volunteers. Year 2 pupils described how they weighed the ingredients to make cheese straws. They developed their computer

skills by using programs to help them make a coat of many colours, linked to religious education work about Joseph.

121. In Year 3, pupils practised their measuring skills when investigating different packaging and its suitability for protecting the contents. Year 5 pupils gained an excellent understanding of strong structures when they made chairs out of tightly rolled newspaper. "What an impossible idea. Newspaper is too floppy to make a chair out of," wrote one pupil beforehand. They then learned the importance of construction, and tested the suitability of the finished chairs by sitting on them. Their accounts of making their chairs show good literacy skills. Year 5 pupils also found out about buildings and constructed strong shapes themselves, inspired by the building works on site. The work demonstrates good development of their skills in mathematical understanding. Year 6 pupils have designed and made a controllable vehicle, evaluating their work as it developed, and modifying their designs accordingly. For example, two pupils found that the material they had chosen for their rocket was too heavy for the motor and decided to change it to papier maché. This task gave pupils an excellent opportunity to put into practice their learning in science, such as how to construct an electric circuit.

122. No lessons were observed, but pupils' work indicated that teachers have high expectations that pupils are accurate in their work, to make sure that their finished projects are of a good standard. In Year 6, teachers encourage pupils to work on their designs for homework and to bring appropriate materials from home to use in school. Pupils talk about their work with obvious pride and enjoyment. The high standard of displays encourages pupils to respect others' work and raises pupils' self esteem.

123. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and supports teachers' planning well. A wide range of resources is readily available. The co-ordinator monitors standards through evaluating finished work and keeping a photographic record. Assessments to accompany the school's scheme of work have recently been introduced. Pupils are encouraged to enter design and technology competitions, and have won welcome sums of money for the school. The school is well placed to continue the good improvement in this subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

124. **Geography:** Evidence from the work seen indicates that Year 2 pupils have attained the standard expected nationally and that the infants' achievement is satisfactory. They have sound knowledge of the immediate locality and places further afield. For example, they have carried out traffic surveys and collected data about local shops. Good examples were seen of pupils recording findings from investigating types of street furniture and of simple map-making, but other work was less demanding.

125. Evidence from work samples indicates that pupils in the juniors also achieve satisfactorily, and that standards in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally. For example, in their study of coastlines, Year 6 pupils have discussed the effect of physical changes on the environment confidently. They describe and give reasons, such as for the effect of litter and waste on the environment. They are learning appropriate fieldwork techniques. Pupils develop decision-making skills through research and data collection activities. However, as in the infants, there is an inconsistency between classes in how well information is recorded and written work is presented.

126. The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to unsatisfactory. In an example of good teaching and learning, Year 6 pupils created a news report about the effects upon a community of cliff top erosion. This activity required them to apply the knowledge and skills from literacy lessons, in which they had studied a variety of news reports and discussed the main features of journalistic style. The quality of their work was enhanced by the good range of information made available to them, including pages from an Internet news site. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, there was insufficient opportunity for pupils to talk about the topic and develop their understanding. What pupils were expected to learn was not made clear, and so they were unsure of how to complete the task.

127. **History:** By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of aspects of the past. Their attainment is broadly what is expected for their age. Some pupils have had the opportunity to handle historical artefacts. They have recorded their observations through drawing, writing and discussion. Activities are planned to develop a sense of chronology. In some classes there is an over-reliance on worksheets and colouring activities, although Year 2 pupils have also completed some independent writing. For example, pupils have recorded their ideas on what life might have been like in the past, in their work on the Fire of London and Victorian life. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

128. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired the knowledge, skills and understanding expected of their age. Their achievement is satisfactory. Through themes such as Britain in the 1930s and the effects of Tudor exploration, they have found out about events using a range of sources of information, including CD-ROMs and the Internet. Year 6 pupils have written confidently from their own research into people living in the past. Good examples were seen on the topics of what life would be like on a Tudor ship, and John Harrison and the longitudinal problem. Pupils make good progress in understanding the story of history, and satisfactory progress in understanding the more analytical aspects of the subject.

129. The teaching and learning were good in the history lessons observed. The teacher's clear questioning and use of photographic evidence kindled Year 2 pupils' interest. Their learning about Florence Nightingale was enhanced by the visit of a staff nurse. They were prompted to ask questions and talk articulately, which contributed to their understanding of differences between the past and the present. Year 3 pupils used the school's archaeological dig facility, and discovered how information about the past is gathered, recorded and interpreted as they handled original Roman artefacts.

130. In both history and geography, the evidence of pupils' written work showed that many teachers rely too heavily on commercially-produced worksheets and colouring-in activities. This has given pupils too few opportunities to communicate their own ideas and explanations, through drawing and independent writing. This limits the development of their understanding in both subjects, lowering the standard attained by the older and higher-attaining pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is also too brief in many classes.

131. The co-ordinator for geography and history is relatively new to the post. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about both subjects, and provides good leadership. For example, she provides useful guidance by teaching in a range of classes and working alongside colleagues. The policies for geography and history are being re-written. The school makes good use of national guidance on the curriculum for both subjects. A monitoring programme has been established, and has correctly identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The school has maintained standards in geography and history since the last inspection, and overall the improvement in these subjects is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

132. A range of printouts of pupils' work with computers was seen, from each year group, and several lessons were observed. These indicated that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at the level expected for pupils of their age, and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors.

133. In the infants, pupils have used word processing and graphics programs regularly. They have learned to combine text with pictures, both by adding clip art to their writing and by adding writing to a picture they have created using a computer. They have generally good skills in using the computer program that has recently been introduced, which integrates various types of computer software. For example, Year 1 pupils who were observed learning how to record survey information they had gathered were able to log on and load the database quickly. By the end of the lesson, most had followed the teacher's instructions successfully and printed out a bar chart showing their results.

134. In the juniors, pupils have been introduced to a wider range of ICT work, including the use of sophisticated software such as Excel, PowerPoint and Word. In word processing, the older pupils show good confidence in using different font styles for particular effects. In the lessons observed, the pupils showed good keyboard skills and knowledge of how to navigate the programs using menus and icons. They learned the skills taught to them quickly, for example when Year 5 pupils worked on writing a series of commands to make a buggy move in a straight line.

135. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to satisfactory. In a particularly effective lesson, Year 6 pupils making a multimedia presentation for younger pupils showed a good awareness of the needs of their audience, as they added animation and sound effects to their computer-versions of traditional stories. All managed to create interesting transitions from one page to another, by experimenting with the commands shown to them by the teacher, and the higher-attaining pupils created very entertaining sequences. This work was linked well to English. Activities in other year groups have been successfully linked to mathematics, science, art and geography. In some lessons, the pupils learned well because their teachers knew who needed help and who could progress faster. For example, a Year 2 class was divided into two groups, one to search the Intranet for information with the help of a classroom assistant, and the other to learn how to find Intranet information, guided by the teacher. Both groups made good progress, successfully finding relevant information about frogs and other creatures, although some of it was rather hard for them to read with understanding.

136. ICT is managed satisfactorily. Considerable improvements have been made recently, and the school is well placed to raise standards in the subject now that the resources are up-to-date and staff have had training. The introduction of schemes of work based on national guidance has improved the curriculum for ICT. Pupils now cover all the required elements although some, such as computer control, have been introduced relatively recently in the juniors. This means that these pupils do not have much previous experience to build on in these aspects of the subject. Nevertheless, they are learning fast because they are very enthusiastic towards ICT, and work confidently and co-operatively in the ICT suite. This has been established since the last inspection, enabling ICT to be taught to whole classes. However, the classroom computers are now used infrequently – they were rarely used during the inspection, and pupils confirmed that most of their use of ICT is in the suite. One reason for this is that the school has not co-ordinated the use of the classroom computers in other subjects, and so teachers miss opportunities for individual pupils to practise and extend the skills they are taught. Pupils' attainment is not assessed regularly enough, and on-going records of how well they have done are not maintained. Overall, the development of ICT since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MUSIC

137. Music continues to be a strength of the school. It is an integral part of school life, and pupils' attainment at the end of the infants and juniors is above national expectations. Pupils sing tunefully and rhythmically with very clear words in assemblies and performances, and have a good understanding of how to improve the quality when necessary. Pupils in Year 2 offer musical opinions confidently, and evaluate each other's work constructively. For example, in a lesson observed, they decided that the cymbal was too loud because the triangle could not be heard. Many pupils start to play the recorder in the infants. Pupils in Year 4 have learned to sustain their parts well in instrumental work, and can identify who is playing 'rhythm' or 'pulse' in a group performance. By Year 6, many pupils have extensive musical knowledge. This was evident from videos seen during the inspection, from group activities, and from displays around the school. Most pupils are musically literate and know what is required of them to perform well.

138. A few lessons were observed during the inspection. In all of them, the teaching and learning were good or better. The best teaching enabled pupils in Year 4 to succeed in the difficult task of singing and playing 'Ticking Clocks' in three parts. Very effective teacher intervention gave pupils the confidence to do this. In other lessons, teachers also had good

subject knowledge, were well prepared and organised, and provided appropriate challenges for pupils. Pupils responded enthusiastically and sensibly.

139. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well, and are proud of others' successes as well as their own. This was evident in an assembly, when pupils in the juniors warmly applauded the orchestra after a lively performance of the Z-Cars theme and 'Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines'. Everyone was inspired by the performance. The final song, entitled 'We Want To Sing', in two parts with orchestral accompaniment, reflected the uplifting tone of the assembly.

140. The music curriculum is rich and varied, and all elements are covered well. Pupils have opportunities to listen to the music of a variety of composers on entry to assembly and in lessons. Displays reflect pupils' feelings about the music they listen to. For example, pupils thought that 'La Rejouissance' by Handel sounded like a royal parade. Many pupils are learning to play instruments, and have passed relevant examinations. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator shares her musical expertise with other teachers who are less confident, and encourages staff who are musically talented to join in activities such as the orchestra, thus providing good role models for pupils. The school has strong musical links with the community, and pupils often perform at events and for community groups. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as the strengths have been maintained.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. A few physical education sessions were observed during the inspection, involving athletics in the infants and swimming and athletics in the juniors. These activities indicated that standards are above the level expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievement is good. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class made good progress in improving their skills in catching and passing a ball, from watching the class teacher demonstrate techniques. In the lessons observed in Years 3 and 4, athletics skills, notably throwing, running and jumping, were above the standard expected for the pupils' ages. When pupils were encouraged to review their performance and consider tactics that would help them improve on their best, their learning was very good. In a swimming lesson, pupils who lacked confidence made particularly good progress by the end of the lesson, benefiting from good poolside coaching by the teacher. Strong and weak swimmers attempted the tasks that progressively developed and strengthened arm and leg movements for the backstroke. This lesson was part of a life-saving programme. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress, while higher-attaining pupils made sound progress.

142. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good overall. Teachers planned the lessons well, ensuring that appropriate attention was given to health, safety and fitness. They had high expectations, and a good knowledge and understanding of the physical education curriculum. They made good use of the available time and managed pupils' behaviour very well, which led to very positive and responsible attitudes. Pupils of all ages worked very well, individually and in teams, with a good sense of teamwork and fair play. Only a few pupils were not able to take part in physical activities, and watched from the sidelines. Sometimes, teachers included these pupils in the evaluations, and so they were purposefully involved and made an active contribution to the lesson. In other lessons, teachers demonstrated activities well but provided too few opportunities for all pupils, including higher attainers, to evaluate and share their observations. In one lesson, the teaching and learning were very good. The teacher paid particularly good attention to individual needs, involving pupils with special educational needs and others new to the class. The pupils were expected to observe demonstrations closely, questioned about why certain techniques and movements were better than others, and then encouraged to use the information to improve their own performance.

143. The curriculum is very broad. It provides a very good range of activities and sports, including weekly swimming lessons for all pupils in the juniors. Pupils are encouraged to

take part in an extensive programme of clubs, training sessions and sports fixtures after school. Large numbers attend regularly. Some pupils represent the school and local clubs in competitions, and do very well. Members of Crystal Palace sports club come into the school to coach football and some racquet sports.

144. The co-ordinator has been a key person in establishing the after-school provision, but has only recently been appointed as a curriculum leader. She has a very good understanding of how assessment and record keeping can be used to raise standards and of the need to ensure that gifted and talented pupils are challenged in lessons. The school recently gained an Activemark in recognition of its commitment to promoting the benefits of physical activity. Management of the subject is satisfactory, with the potential for being very good in the future. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Religious education has a high profile in the school. Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Evidence from pupils' work, from observations during lessons, and from discussions with pupils and teachers reflects a good factual knowledge about Christianity and other major religions. Pupils also show good ability to use their knowledge and understanding, for example in developing very thoughtful views and opinions on spiritual issues such as 'the meaning of life'. Pupils achieve well in both the infants and juniors because their knowledge is built up methodically and they are given many opportunities to discuss what they know in relation to themselves and others. Lessons are planned imaginatively to capture pupils' interest, and they respond very positively. Pupils of all ages present their written work well, showing a great deal of care and thoughtfulness. Assemblies are used well to further pupils' knowledge and understanding and to promote spiritual and moral development. For example, pupils listened very attentively to the parable of 'The Christian's Armour', which was told in a lively and meaningful way.

146. The teaching and learning observed ranged from very good to satisfactory. A lesson in Year 2 was particularly successful because the teacher made very good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest. A pupil from another class was invited to talk about Islam. Pupils were fascinated to see artefacts, and to hear about the naming ceremony in a religion different from their own. They were able to compare this ceremony with a christening because they listened so attentively to what the teacher and the guest speaker were saying. Pupils showed the utmost respect for each other, and demonstrated what they already knew, for example how to handle the Koran respectfully. Good teaching in Year 4 enabled pupils to learn more about Buddhism, and to understand that meditation can be very inspiring or just a way to calm down. Having listened to the story about the tortoise who asked too many questions, pupils were asked to think about one question which they would most like answered. Their responses reflected a great deal of mature thinking, for example 'How did I get to be this person?' and 'If God is in everybody, why do people do bad things?'.

147. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has recently prepared very useful guidelines for teachers, and is currently preparing resource packs to accompany specific topics. He has emphasised the equal importance of 'learning about' and 'learning from'. The improvement in religious education since the last inspection is good because standards are higher and the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development.