

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KING'S FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118585

Headteacher: Mrs Stella Garner

Reporting inspector: Dr T Simpson  
[10428]

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225027

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cedar Avenue  
Gravesend  
Kent

Postcode: DA12 5JT

Telephone number: 01474 566979

Fax number: 01474 567767

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Adrian Cunningham

Date of previous inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr T Simpson 10428	Registered inspector	Science Art Music Equal opportunities	Results and achievements Management and efficiency Attitudes, values and personal development
Mr J Kerr 18919	Lay inspector		Links with the community Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support and guidance Partnership with parents
Mr A Green 12367	Team inspector	Information technology Physical education Special educational needs	
Mrs J Howell 18083	Team inspector	Geography Religious education Foundation stage	Teaching
Mrs J Johnson 24891	Team inspector	Mathematics Design & Technology	Assessment
Mr J Laver 1085	Team inspector	English History	Learning opportunities

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Associates Ltd  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

<b>REPORT CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

King's Farm is a large primary school mainly serving a housing estate in east Gravesend. There are 343 pupils on roll, including 65 who are in reception or nursery classes. Of the latter group, 40 are part time pupils who attend a designated nursery class. For the purposes of the report, nursery and reception pupils are described as being in the foundation stage. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups. Pupils enter the school with a range of attainment, but this is well below average overall. About 61 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is well above average. The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational need is also above average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average.

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

This is an effective school overall. Although standards are still below average in several subjects by the end of Key Stage 2, rates of learning are satisfactory and most pupils make at least sound progress as they proceed through the school. They are well supported by all staff, have positive attitudes and mostly behave well. Provision for spiritual development is good and provision for moral and social development very good. Teaching is good or better in nearly eighty per cent of lessons. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The headteacher and staff have a corporate vision for taking the school forward and improving standards further. A range of strategies for achieving this has been put in place and these are already proving successful. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Income is above average but the school provides satisfactory value for money. Stringent targets have been set for further improving literacy and numeracy and these are on course to being met.

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

- Teaching is good and has a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they are making.
- Pupils are well supported and guided. Provision for their moral and social development is very good and results in positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Overall management at the school is good and there are effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life – including standards – and taking appropriate action.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils are well taught, frequently making good progress.
- There are good links with the community.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school.

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

- Standards are still not high enough in all the core subjects.
- Pupils at Key Stage 2 are not taught swimming – a statutory requirement.

*The areas 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 1998, when it was deemed to have serious weaknesses – mainly as a result of poor progress in developing literacy skills at Key Stage 2. Since then it has made good progress in addressing most of the issues raised. As a result of effective strategies, standards in English, mathematics, science, history and Key Stage 2 geography have all improved. Teaching – particularly in English at Key Stage 2 – has improved significantly. Curricular planning and assessment procedures are now better. Good use is made of assessment data to inform strategic planning, to inform the deployment of human and financial resources where these are most needed, and to track the progress of individual pupils in key subjects. Management has improved and co-ordinators now have a clearer role in the forward development of their subjects. Standards in information and communication technology are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. This is mainly because the school has

focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy and has not kept up with recent developments in the subject. In view of the improvements made by the school since the time of the last inspection, it is the judgement of this inspection that it no longer suffers from serious weaknesses.

## 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	E*	E*	E*	E
Mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E
Science	E*	E*	E*	E

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

This indicates that in the national tests for eleven year olds, results in all three subjects were very low, being in the lowest five per cent nationally. These figures, however, disguise the real improvements in standards that are currently being achieved. For example, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected Level 4 or above significantly improved between 1999 and 2000 in English, mathematics and science. The findings of the inspection confirm these improvements. Standards in all three subjects, although still below average, are getting better throughout the school. Between 1996 and 1999 trends in the school's improvement were in line with national improvements, but were higher than these between 1999 and 2000. The school has set stringent targets for further improving standards in literacy and numeracy and these are likely to be met. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are below expected levels, but standards in other subjects are in line with the national expectation. Pupils' overall achievement is good at the foundation stage and satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. Despite the recent significant improvements, however, standards are still not high enough.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good – pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Mostly good – some pupils exhibit challenging behaviour which is effectively dealt with by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Good – pupils work hard and have good relationships with staff and with one another. They co-operate well with one another.
Attendance	This is unsatisfactory – mainly because of the above average rates of unauthorised absence.

Most pupils enjoy taking part in lessons and in the other activities provided by the school. They are keen to answer questions, to contribute ideas and to take part in practical work. They show respect for each other and for staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen during the inspection. It was good or better in seventy nine per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in twenty seven per cent. As a result, pupils learn well. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen at all stages of education in the school. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and there are no subjects where teaching is relatively weak. The teaching of English permeates the whole curriculum. A particular strength of the teaching at the school is the very good management of pupils, which is having a positive effect on the standards of behaviour being achieved. Teachers plan well and the methods they use are suitably varied. Levels of challenge are frequently high – with good questioning being used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In an occasional lesson, however, work is not matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils. This results in some higher attaining pupils not being challenged enough. Good use of time and support staff means that little time is wasted and pupils receive the support they need to extend their learning. The teaching meets the needs of the pupils well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the required areas except for swimming at Key Stage 2. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good throughout the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is good, for both moral and social development it is very good and for cultural development it is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Procedures for monitoring their academic progress are good overall. Assessment is good in the key subjects but not consistent across the whole curriculum. Staff know and care for the pupils well.

The school works well with the parents and most are pleased with the education provided for their children. Although an otherwise broad curriculum is provided, the school's failure to provide swimming at Key Stage 2 is a breach of statutory requirements. Planning is effective in most subjects and all pupils - including those with special educational needs - are well cared for.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall management at the school is good. The headteacher is strongly committed to raising standards further and has a well-established monitoring role. The deputy has a clear complementary role. There is an active senior management team and co-ordinators monitor various aspects of their subjects including planning and resources. Some have also begun to monitor teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very supportive – the chair and some other individual governors bring relevant expertise to their roles and are regular visitors to the school. The governing body as a whole, however, does not yet carry out sufficient focused monitoring of the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – the school has evaluated its strengths and areas for further development and has taken relevant action.
The strategic use of resources	Resources – including staff – are mostly used efficiently, and available finances are spent well in relation to the school's needs.

Resources are satisfactory overall. They are good for English, mathematics and information and communication technology. There are weaknesses in resources used to support religious education. Staffing levels are high. There are weaknesses in aspects of the accommodation available for pupils in Key Stage 2, but these are currently being addressed. All staff who have management responsibility have a shared commitment to further improvement. The school has carried out some analysis of its cost effectiveness and makes purchases in relation to the best value it can get.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and helps them become mature.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are not kept well enough informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school does not work closely enough with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agreed with the positive response to the questionnaire. It judged that information provided for parents was satisfactory overall – although sometimes unattractive. Only a very small proportion of the parents returned the questionnaire and, therefore, its validity is questionable. The inspection could find no evidence whatsoever that the school does not work closely with parents. On the contrary, it concluded that the school goes out of its way to involve parents in all its activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the most recent National Curriculum tests of seven year olds (SATs), results were very low in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, they were below average in reading and mathematics, but broadly average in writing. Results of teacher assessments in science were also well below average. In the tests of eleven year olds, standards were very low in all three subjects and well below average in comparison with similar schools. However, these results disguise the very real improvements in standards that the school has achieved in the recent past. Since the last inspection, when poor results were responsible for the school being judged to have serious weaknesses, a range of strategies for improvement have been implemented. These include rigorous monitoring of teaching, the analysis of assessment results to identify specific weaknesses within subjects, and the establishment of various ways of ameliorating these. The latter include better planning, more effective teaching and the identification of specific pupils who need extra support. Resources have been deliberately targeted at raising standards overall, but particularly in literacy. As a result - although the average points score was lower - the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 or above was higher in the year 2000 than in 1999 in both writing and mathematics, while the percentage of eleven year old who reached the expected Level 4 or above in all three subjects was a significant improvement on the results of the previous year. The school's trend in improvement was broadly in line with the national average between 1996 and 1999, but was higher than this between 1999 and 2000. Stringent targets for further improvement have been set and these are likely to be met.
2. The findings of the inspection are that standards are still below average at the end of both key stages in English, mathematics and science but that significant improvements are being made throughout the school. Standards in information and communication technology are also below average. This is a decline on the findings of the previous inspection and is largely a result of the school's appropriate focus on the other key subjects. Standards in religious education continue to be below expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 - although there is evidence that these are now improving earlier on in the key stage - but there was not enough evidence to judge standards in the subject at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in the other subjects are in line with the national expectation. For geography at the end of Key Stage 1 and history at both key stages, this is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.
3. Baseline assessments indicate that pupils enter the school with well below average attainment. There is clear evidence that pupils who enter the school during Key Stage 2 frequently have special needs. This is a contributory factor to the standards being achieved. There is also a very significant number of pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, with a higher proportion in two year groups. At the time of the inspection, 73 per cent of pupils in Year 3 and 70 per cent of pupils in Year 5 were on the register for Stages one to five. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriate standards in relation to their specific targets and goals. Their special learning needs are identified early and appropriate learning targets are set, especially in English, mathematics, behaviour and social skills. Gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are sound in English and good in the majority of other subjects. Pupils in the nurture group - a small support class - make good progress in relation to their specific social and learning needs. Pupils in the Year 5 focus group - another small class - make satisfactory progress.
4. Overall achievement, therefore, is satisfactory and improving. It is good by the end of the foundation stage where standards overall rise from well below average to below average by the time children reach Year 1, and in science by the end of Key Stage 1. It is good in geography during Key Stage 2, but unsatisfactory in religious education in Key Stage 2 and in information and communication technology at both key stages. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

5. During Key Stage 1, pupils develop their listening skills faster than their speaking skills. Many have a limited vocabulary which impacts on learning in other subjects – such as science. Although listening skills continue to develop well through Key Stage 2, by the time they leave the school, many pupils still suffer from poor oral competence. Although reading skills improve during Key Stage 1, by the end of the key stage they are still below average, with only a minority of pupils being fluent, accurate readers. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils read a greater range of books. While many enjoy reading and can talk at a basic level about the plot and their likes and dislikes, only a minority of high-achievers reads with appropriate fluency and few read with expression. Pupils have made considerable strides in the development of their writing skills by the time they reach seven, although many are still below average for pupils of this age. By Year 2 many pupils are capable of sustained writing, with some developing joined up handwriting and introducing structure to their stories. However, there are weaknesses in spelling, grammar and punctuation. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to broaden the range of their writing and produce a good variety of different forms by the time they reach eleven. High achievers understand the difference between active and passive verbs. However, there are still weaknesses in formal aspects of writing.
6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics during Key Stage 1 and by Year 2 most have a secure knowledge of mathematical language, can count and order numbers up to one hundred and are able to use number bonds up to ten in the addition and subtraction of slightly larger numbers. They also know the names of two-dimensional and three-dimensional solids. Many of the older pupils in Key Stage 2 have a sound understanding of number and the four operations. Their understanding of decimals is developing, and higher achievers understand the equivalence of simple fractions. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils have a developing understanding of various scientific concepts such as electrical polarity. Although, sometimes, their limited vocabulary prevents them from explaining what they have learned. By Year 4, pupils can carry out a simple investigation and record their findings successfully. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of a wide range of scientific information – with some being clear about, for example, the need to change only one variable in a valid scientific experiment.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are below expected levels at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with simple keyboard and mouse operations, but are generally insecure with their computer skills and knowledge. Information and communication technology skills are also under developed at the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils, for example, not being confident enough with procedures for changing the font, style and colour of their word processed stories and plays. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations in Years 3 and 4, largely as the result of the introduction of a new scheme of work. However, this has not yet had the time to impact on older pupils, and these still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of religious issues.
8. In art, Key Stage 1 pupils successfully use a range of media to produce representations of the human eye, while by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils effectively differentiate between the styles of different Victorian artists and reflect these in their own work. In Year 2, pupils design and make wheeled vehicles and in Year 5, they construct model volcanoes as part of a geography topic. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils appreciate the similarities and differences between their own locality and a village in Mexico. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have soundly developed geographical skills, including the ability to interpret ordnance survey maps. By the age of seven, most pupils can successfully distinguish between aspects of life in different times. By the age of eleven, their historical knowledge and understanding are in line with the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good control of dynamics and tempo when playing a range of untuned percussion instruments, while by the end of Key Stage 2, most can identify different repetitive melodies within a piece of music. The quality of singing is good throughout the school. In gymnastics, pupils perform with suppleness and control. By Year 6, they can put together a sequence of slow, fast, high and low movements.

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

9. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They are enthusiastic about what the school provides and enjoy taking part in lessons. There is a purposeful working atmosphere in the nursery and this well motivated approach continues through the school. As pupils mature, they are keen to answer questions, to contribute ideas and to take part in practical work. Even in the lower sets, as they learn in small groups, they work hard benefiting from the good relations with their teachers and learning assistants. Pupils focus well when set independent activities and there are good levels of co-operation when asked to work in groups. Only on rare occasions do pupils lose concentration, caused mainly by failing to listen appropriately, or where others in the class are too eager to answer questions.
10. Behaviour is mostly good in class and about the school. Pupils show respect for each other and for staff. They are polite to midday supervisors and visitors. A small minority can be confrontational to teachers and classroom assistants. There is very little bullying and pupils are able to resolve their differences under the guidance of staff.
11. Overall, pupils with special educational needs have a good attitude towards their learning. Their respect for others is good. Pupils in the nurture group have very good attitudes to their learning and towards each other and the adults in the group. Pupils in the Year 5 focus group have satisfactory attitudes to learning and to others. Children settle quickly to the daily routines of the nursery and grow in confidence. They quickly become independent and respond to the activities provided with pleasure. The children are friendly and with support, make their needs known to the staff. Their behaviour is very good. When working together in the reception class, they co-operate well and support one another in their learning.
12. There has been a high level of exclusions in recent years, mainly of boys in Year 6. The current situation has improved. So far this year four boys have been excluded and one of these has now left the area. These exclusions were for inappropriate behaviour. Parents are very supportive in the event of exclusion, for instance helping to supervise the work taken home. Pupils who work with the focus group can now be more easily integrated into the mainstream of learning. The school now resorts more to internal exclusion. Pupils respond well to the awards system, which recognises all who have made the effort to improve any aspect of their school life.
13. Pupils are proud of their school. There is a group of pupils in the upper school who regularly volunteer to help clear away after lunch. In this part of the school, which is particularly dilapidated externally, there is no litter and classrooms are kept tidy by pupils who go about their work cheerfully. The Groundwork Trust has used pupils to help design new play areas including quiet zones. Year 6 pupils organise their own youth club in the summer term. Pupils treat school equipment sensibly and children in the nursery choose and treat toys carefully. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. Pupils work well in groups and respond with interest to examples of exceptional work. They are keen to talk about what they know and listen to the results of others' research.
14. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Last year and in the year to date, it is below the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average. This is mainly as a result of some parents not informing the school of the reasons for their children's absence. In general, pupils are punctual at the start of the day and for lessons.
15. Since the last inspection report, behaviour and attitudes to learning have been maintained across all year groups.

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

16. All lessons observed throughout the school were at least satisfactory, with seventy-nine per cent of all lessons observed being good or better. Twenty seven per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Examples of good and very good teaching were observed throughout the school. This represents a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall. Across the school, the good and very good teaching is having a direct and positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and is raising standards.

17. The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is good overall. Teachers working with these children have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of those in the early years, and of the curriculum to meet those needs. Planning is detailed and carefully matched to the recommended early learning goals for children of this age.
18. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs in classes is good. Work is generally well matched to the individual needs of the pupils and addresses the academic, behaviour and social targets on their individual education plans. Pupils receive very good support from the learning support assistants, who are well briefed, efficient and an integral part of the teaching team. Parent volunteers also give good support in classes. The majority of learning support assistants are used well at the start of lessons to prepare work or to make notes on pupils' involvement, progress and attainment. However, a small minority of learning support assistants are not always gainfully involved during the introduction to a lesson. Not all teachers' make specific reference to the activities for pupils with special educational needs on their daily planning.
19. The quality of teaching in the nurture group is good. Work is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The very good organisational and management skills of the group's teacher and the use of short, well-focused, activities, ensures that the pupils remain on task and, therefore, make good progress. The learning support assistants in the nurture group give very good support. They are given very good guidance by the group's teacher, and also use their initiative well to adapt their teaching to the specific needs of the pupils. They are integral members of the group. Pupils from the group integrate well in to classes for daily registration and every Wednesday afternoon for lessons. By the start of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are fully integrated in to classes. The quality of teaching in the Year 5 focus group is good overall and, at times, very good. The teacher, with very good support from the learning support assistants, ensures that pupils learning and behaviour targets are addressed. Relationships between the teacher and the pupils are good. The teacher constantly uses praise and encouragement well to raise the self-esteem of the pupils and to reward good behaviour.
20. For pupils in the foundation stage, daily activities are very well prepared and the good range of resources available is effectively used to stimulate interest and participation. The area of personal and social development is taught well by all adults and the provision for purposeful play, particularly in the nursery, forms a secure basis upon which interaction with others develops. All adults listen with interest to what the children have to say and through a range of strategies develop and extend their speaking and listening skills. The days are well structured to provide periods of time for free choice activities, periods of interactive group activities with an adult and whole class sessions. The focused group activities in the nursery are very well led by all adults. The reception teacher has appropriately introduced aspects of literacy and mathematics that are generally based on national strategies. This is proving to be beneficial to the children, particularly in the development of the basic skills of early reading. Relationships between adults and children, both in the nursery and reception class are very good, which enable all children to feel confident and secure. All staff use constant praise and encouragement and each child is valued. Both in the nursery and reception class, teachers and support staff operate very successfully as a team.
21. Throughout the school, good and very good teaching in a significant number of lessons is characterised by well-planned lessons and effective teaching of basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The strongest point of the teaching is the management of the pupils, which results in their good behaviour and positive attitude to work. The good use of time, support staff and resources means that very little time is wasted and most pupils receive the support they require to extend their learning. However, at times, pupils of all levels of attainment are given the same work to do, which means that higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which is effectively communicated to the pupils and together with high expectations of pupils, is a major influence on the good progress they often make. Teachers are skilled in finding different ways to question and use a range of methods to ensure successful learning for all pupils.

22. At Key Stage 1, examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen in several subjects and pupils learned well. Many strengths were noted, particularly in English, mathematics and science. No significant weaknesses were identified. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement concerning the quality of teaching in religious education, history, geography, design and technology and information and communication technology. In English, the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive impact on learning. This was exemplified in a Year 2 literacy lesson that focused on story settings. The teacher skilfully led the whole class session using a combination of effective questioning and explanations. Careful planning incorporated appropriate content at all three levels of work and enabled all pupils to achieve well. Effective use was made of the learning support assistant to monitor and access targeted pupils at various stages of the lesson. In many English lessons, teachers show secure subject knowledge and the emphasis on pupils' involvement is a key factor in motivating them to learn. The teaching of English permeates the whole curriculum, and pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately through a range of approaches. The basic skills of literacy are soundly developed and reinforced across other areas of the curriculum. Very good strategies are used in lessons, where new vocabulary introduced is closely related to the subject, such as that seen in science and art. Good learning occurs in numeracy lessons as teachers are well aware of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and apply their knowledge well. In most classes, the very good mental mathematics session moves at a brisk pace, to which pupils respond very well. Teachers are good at questioning and ensure all pupils have the opportunity to participate. In science, teachers show good knowledge of the subject through the clear explanations given to pupils and ensure that most pupils know what they are trying to achieve. The very effective use of appropriate vocabulary in both science and art lessons is beginning to help pupils to develop appropriate concepts. In art, good use is made of stimulating resources to support pupils' close observational skills. In most lessons, time is used effectively and teachers provide constant knowledgeable support and guidance to the pupils. In music, teachers use a good variety of methods that inspire pupils to achieve. Teaching in physical education is characterised by lessons that are carefully planned and very good use is made of pupils to demonstrate their skills to the class. Very good discipline ensures all pupils work hard and are very involved in the lessons.
23. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is also good. This judgement is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The major strengths of the teaching at this key stage are the management of the pupils, the quality of questioning and a particularly secure knowledge and understanding of the development of literacy. Strengths in the quality of learning are the way pupils try hard and the interest they show in the tasks that they are given. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all subjects apart from physical education where it is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in information and communication technology. A Year 5 numeracy lesson illustrated the general strengths of the teaching and how well the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson was very well planned and the teacher demonstrated very secure subject knowledge in both her direct teaching and in her effective questioning. Good emphasis was given to reinforcing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the key vocabulary required in the lesson, such as symmetry, scale, rotation and tessellation. The brisk pace and specific time targets for the various activities maintained the pupils' concentration and accelerated their learning. A Year 5 literacy lesson with a group of lower attaining pupils embodied the features of the very good teaching found at this key stage. The well-structured lesson, with very positive relationships between adults and pupils, contributed to very successful learning by this group of pupils. The very good deployment of the learning support assistants, their involvement with the pupils and the secure atmosphere ensured all pupils maintained their interest and were confident enough to 'have a go'. In science, teachers make good use of discussion, demonstration and practical activities to increase the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, at times, the investigations are too teacher directed and do not take into account the needs of all pupils, and the opportunity for the more able pupils to further develop their investigative skills is missed. Throughout the school, teachers assess pupils well during lessons through discussion and observation. In the best lessons, teachers use their assessments to plan tasks that are well matched to the needs of all pupils. Teachers talk to pupils about their work and most use positive comments in their marking to help them improve. Homework is used satisfactorily to consolidate and extend pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science.

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

24. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 1. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, although music receives a relatively low time allocation. Additionally there is an effective programme of personal, social and health education - including drugs awareness and sex education - taught to all pupils. The curriculum is also broad and balanced at Key Stage 2, but there is a statutory breach because swimming is not taught. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need, those in the nurture group and those in the Year 5 focus group have full access to the curriculum. In the nurture group, very good use is made of regular educational visits to enhance the curriculum and to support pupils' social development.
25. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children in the foundation stage are good. The planning for the children is detailed and both in the nursery and the reception class takes full account of the designated areas of learning as recommended in national guidance for the foundation stage. In the nursery planning is well linked to appropriate topics, such as 'Autumn and Night', 'All About Me' and 'Growth and Changes'. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality, and helping the children to acquire language skills. There is very good provision for personal and social development. This is a strength of the nursery class, which prepares children well for full-time education in the reception class. The nursery and reception class together form a coherent department and operate effectively as an early years group.
26. Several subjects have developed more detailed and effective policies and schemes of work since the previous inspection. These enable teachers to build more effectively on pupils' earlier learning and are contributing to the raising of standards. Improvements are notable for example in English, history, science and geography. However, planning for information and communication technology remains unsatisfactory, as the planning for the teaching of skills in this area is limited.
27. The curriculum and standards achieved also benefit from the wide range of extracurricular activities, which have a very good take-up by pupils. For example, there are clubs in gymnastics, football, dance, French, arts and crafts and homework. There are frequent trips out of school. These include not only visits to commercial attractions but residential stopovers and visits to activity centres. A visit to Paris has taken place. These clubs and other opportunities are well supported. They reflect pupils' enthusiasm for the school and help to raise standards. The school has satisfactory curriculum links with local secondary schools, which helps to smooth the transition at eleven to the next phase of education.
28. The school's provision for literacy is good. Efforts are made to extend pupils' specialised vocabulary by highlighting key words in several subjects, such as mathematics, English and history. Teachers also give due attention to how they write on whiteboards. However, many pupils experience difficulty in writing extensively or accurately, and this sometimes restricts their progress at both key stages, for example in religious education when they are required to express or write their thoughts, and in science when they have to write up the results of experiments. Provision for numeracy is well supported across the curriculum in, for example, history and geography.
29. The previous inspection judged that the school's curriculum was relevant, balanced and broadly based, with all statutory requirements met. This is still the case, except that there is now no teaching of swimming. Pupils continue to enjoy full access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities continue to provide good and enjoyable learning opportunities. The planning of subjects is now more effectively developed in most subjects, and this has improved what was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection. However, although information and communication technology is taught to a degree which meets statutory requirements, its use as an integral aid to teaching and learning across all subjects of the curriculum is undeveloped, except in the area of word processing, and pupils lack many of the necessary skills. Overall the school has made good progress in developing its curriculum since the previous inspection.

30. The school has very good links with the community, which broaden pupils' knowledge and add interest to their learning. Kent Children's University offer places on Saturday morning courses where pupils can study social history, dance and drama, as well as information and communication technology and design and technology. Such courses also help to develop pupils' social skills as they meet with pupils from other schools. The local fire brigade also takes cadets on Saturday mornings for initiative training. The local community policewoman often attends these sessions, as she knows the pupils. A major chemical company in the area gives valuable assistance in providing funds for visits, which ensures all pupils can attend. Access to the Internet is not well developed and the school has not yet capitalised on opportunities to create links with other schools around the world.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils' overall personal development. Children are introduced to spiritual and moral themes in well-chosen stories in the nursery. These themes continue through the school in assemblies and in religious education. There was absolute silence when a visiting speaker showed pupils a handkerchief taken to war by his grandfather. Pupils are given time to reflect. For instance, on the theme of 'people who matter', Key Stage 1 pupils were asked to reflect on what it would be like to be caught up in cross fire in their own streets. Teachers provide good role models and encourage pupils to recognise excellence in their own work and the work of others. Through a more focussed attitude, teachers and support staff working together have begun to alter the moral ethos of the school in a very positive way. Provision for spiritual development is now good and that for moral development is now very good.
32. The school also makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The breakfast club has become an institution where parents can meet together, where they can get to know the teachers and where pupils can make a good start to the day with their friends. It is also a valuable lesson for pupils to see adults meeting in such friendly surroundings. The nurture group helps pupils to express themselves and learn about each other. The school provides opportunities through their links with the community for pupils to meet other pupils and to discuss their concerns with visiting speakers. Each year the pupils in Year 6 organise their own youth club, and all age groups assist with school fund raising efforts.
33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Displays reflect multicultural themes. However, though European art is included in the Year 6 curriculum, there are no examples of non-European art in the school. Some is planned, however, for later in the year. School trips include visits to galleries and exhibitions.
34. Since the previous inspection report, the school has improved on its provision for pupils personal development overall. This is particularly noticeable in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

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

35. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good in both key stages and have improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. The results of Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) and non-statutory tests in English, mathematics and science are regularly analysed. This provides the school with detailed information, which helps it to track the progress of individual pupils and to decide groupings within classes and sets where applicable. It is also used to assess the relative progress of girls and boys and different ability groups, as well as providing information about areas of the curriculum which need to be highlighted in future teaching. In mathematics, for example, the school made a decision to focus more on pupils' recall of multiplication tables and in science on pupils' vocabulary as a result of weaknesses indicated through test analyses. In English, pupils' have individual targets in writing, reading, spelling and speaking and listening, and these are monitored regularly. In mathematics individual pupils work towards group targets and these too are regularly monitored and the information used well in forward planning. In science, although assessment information is used well to inform strategic planning, it is used less successfully to inform planning for some lessons. Assessment procedures in information technology are unsatisfactory. In religious education and the foundation subjects they include brief lesson evaluations and the completion of half termly record sheets.



36. Each pupil has a record of achievement which contains information of successes outside subject attainment. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' oral and recorded work is good. Statutory assessments in all relevant subjects are recorded satisfactorily at the end of Key Stage 2 and passed on to the appropriate secondary school.
37. The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are very good and are being implemented in accordance with the Code of Practice. This includes assessing pupils' needs, planning subsequent work and developing and using individual educational plans. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are given very good support and are helped in a positive manner to meet their targets in learning and behaviour through well-structured programmes. Two days a week a teacher is employed specifically to assess and give extra support for pupils with statements. A teacher is also responsible for supporting pupils in care. Individual education plans are generally specific, although a small number, especially when produced by computer, are not always specific enough. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed. Pupils with statements of special educational needs, and those in the nurture and focus groups, are given very good support. Liaison with outside agencies, the local family centre and the "Smile" (Statement and Inclusion) service and external support staff is good. Good support is given by outside agencies, for example the educational psychologist, "Smile", the school nurse and the educational welfare officer.
38. Assessment and record keeping procedures in the nursery and reception class are well established, and regular observations of the children at work and play, within each area of learning are well documented. Consequently, teachers have an overview of the curriculum and recognise the purpose and potential for each activity. An early years entry profile is completed for each child with the parents and carers during their initial visit to the nursery. This informs staff well of the child's skills, interests and personality before starting the nursery. Detailed 'pen portraits' are kept of the child's first few weeks in the nursery and after four to six weeks, the profile is reviewed by the nursery teacher and shared with the parents and carers. Baseline assessment is carried out when the children enter the reception class and again at the end of the year to assess their progress before moving into Year 1. Teachers know their pupils well. The welfare and guidance of each individual pupil is their prime concern. Parents are pleased that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
39. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are good. Teachers and learning support assistants take notes in many lessons, looking particularly for adverse trends. Extra attention is given to those pupils who may be making less progress than expected. Parents of those pupils are immediately informed. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are satisfactory. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer who is conducting a special project on this and a number of similar schools in the area with the aim of increasing the rate of attendance. The schools and police carried out a three-day exercise in this part of Gravesend to detect the level of truancy. Only one boy from the school was found with no reason for being out of school. There are a number of large families in the catchment area whose children, despite regular contact by the school are often absent without an authorised reason. The recent introduction of the breakfast club, which is popular, is having a beneficial effect on attendance and punctuality.
40. Procedures for monitoring discipline and behaviour are very successful. The behaviour policy in the staff handbook is detailed and is regularly reviewed. Every term, for instance, strategies for dealing with older pupils are revised as necessary. Rules are devised with pupils each year so that they are well aware of the high standards of behaviour expected of them. There is a limited amount of bullying but this is not a serious problem as it is well handled, and staff work well together to eliminate oppressive behaviour. Lessons have been learned from the focus group work in dealing with confrontational pupils. For instance, resolution skills now form part of the personal, social and health education programme, as pupils learn to accept other points of view.
41. Procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' well-being and safety are good. The health and safety policy of the school is thorough and includes risk assessment of the main areas and

activities. Staff and governors carry out routine checks of both premises and equipment and defects are dealt with correctly. All staff and those who are new to the school are fully aware of child protection procedures and the need for discretion. Pupils' personal and health education is covered in a well-devised programme, which includes sex education and drugs awareness. Some of the topics are covered in sessions for younger pupils at a mobile 'Life Education Centre'. Parents are fully informed of the programme, particularly where sensitive treatment is appropriate. The school has an excellent relationship with the local medical centre and the community police officer. She regularly attends the breakfast club as well as assisting with the personal, social and health education programme. This community help not only provides specialist teaching but also develops pupils' confidence and social skills as they discuss matters of health and safety with visiting adults.

42. Since the last inspection report, the school continues to show a genuine concern for the well being of its pupils.

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

43. Although there was only a limited response to the parents' questionnaire, parents are pleased with the way the school is run and the education provided for their children. They say the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best and it helps them to become mature and responsible. The inspection supports the parents' views.
44. The school works hard to involve parents in the education of their children. They are generally supportive but some find it difficult to manage the parental challenges set to raise standards. The school has arranged meetings to explain the purpose of the literacy and numeracy strategies. These meetings were well attended. A limited number of parents are attending a ten week course on work in education in order that they can help in school and contribute to the school's development. The school can rely on a number of parent volunteers to help with reading, craftwork and on visits. These numbers have significantly increased as more parents come to help with the breakfast club.
45. The school has established good links with those parents who have children with special educational needs. Parents receive early notification of their children's needs and are kept fully informed. They know the point of contact in the school. Regular meetings are held to ensure that parents are aware of all aspects of their children's needs. Liaison with parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. The provision for parents of pupils in the nurture group to visit, and to discuss their children's progress, is very good. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in review meetings.
46. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school's prospectus is detailed but not very exciting. This is also the case with the governors' annual report to parents. The school's newsletters are more imaginative and include well-chosen examples of pupils' world. Letters home are friendly and informative. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are personal and say what pupils know and can do. Teachers work closely with parents in discussing their children's work, which is reviewed at regular intervals. However, parents expressed some concerns about how well informed they are about their children's progress.
47. The information provided for parents by the nursery is very good. A notice board displays information about the nursery. This can also be used by parents and carers to advertise items for sale. Regular letters are sent home informing parents of any news and to share nursery and children's successes. A booklet is provided for parents that contains points to consider when their child starts the nursery and covers the wide range of activities provided for the children. Once a week parents and carers are invited to join their child for circle time along with younger siblings and other relatives and friends. Prior to the children starting in the nursery, the teacher carries out home visits when the child is shown a book about the activities at the nursery. Parents and carers are invited to work with their children alongside nursery staff, either on an occasional basis or as part of a helpers' rota. This has proved to be a valuable learning experience for the parents/carers and children.

48. The Headteacher regularly mentions the importance of attendance at all meetings including those with new parents. Reading is taken home by the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1. However, the benefit from the home reading programme is not carried forward into Key Stage 2 by all pupils. The parent, teacher and friends association gives valuable support to the school, helping with its activities and raising funds for its use.
49. Since the last inspection report, the school successfully continues its work to involve parents in the life of the school and the education of their children.

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

50. Overall management at the school is good – an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is strongly committed to raising standards further. She has taken firm action to meet the issues raised in the previous report by, for example, establishing strong monitoring systems, generating a range of positive ideas and empowering all staff to carry out their various roles effectively. She has made effective use of the money available to the school by placing human resources where they are most needed and has a deep commitment to the overall welfare of the pupils in her care. Her own monitoring role is well established. With the support of her deputy and local authority advisers she has appropriately monitored numeracy and literacy teaching in all classes and has seen all teachers teach during the current term. This strategy has supported rising standards in the quality of teaching at the school. The deputy has a clear complementary role, supporting the headteacher well in the forward development of the school. In addition to managing the key areas of assessment and numeracy, she has a significant part in the overall development of the curriculum and is line manager for support staff. The latter have been appraised and set individual targets. Other members of staff with management responsibility also have a shared commitment for improvement. Subject co-ordinators currently monitor planning and manage their own budgets. Some key subject co-ordinators have had the opportunity to monitor teaching, an aspect of their role that the school is appropriately planning to develop further. There is an active senior management team which meets regularly to discuss both long term developmental strategies and to influence the day to day management of the school. Its composition reflects the school's aims, as it includes literacy, numeracy and science co-ordinators. Each member takes a turn at being manager of the day – effectively third in charge of the school – which is a successful strategy for their personal development as well as being an equitable means of sharing responsibility among the senior staff. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. They are allocated an induction tutor from the senior staff who provides advice and support on all areas of teaching and school life. Routine administration is effective.
51. The co-ordinators for special educational needs provide very good leadership. They are responsible for different age ranges and aspects in the school, which overlap each key stage to ensure continuity and progression. The co-ordinator for the nurture group also provides very good leadership. All special needs co-ordinators are well qualified. They understand the pupils' needs very well. They are well supported by highly motivated and well-trained learning support assistants, a teacher responsible for pupils in care and a part time teacher who is employed to support those pupils with statements. The paperwork is thorough and complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. The only exception is that the special educational needs co-ordinators are not specifically named in the brochure for parents and the handbook for teachers. The governor for special educational needs visits the school regularly and is kept fully informed. There are regular reports to the governing body on the progress and the effects of the provision. The management of the provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. The co-ordinator, who teaches in the nursery has a very clear overview of the provision and provides very good leadership. There is very good liaison between the nursery and reception teachers.
52. The governing body is very supportive of the school. The chair and some other individual governors are regular visitors to the school. Several bring relevant expertise to support their role. The chair, for example, is an expert on health and safety issues while the chair of finance has a background in banking. The work of the governing body is supported by a number of relevant committees. The

governing body as a whole, however, does not yet carry out sufficient focused monitoring of the curriculum. The school development plan is now a practical working document which is enhanced by individual subject reviews and action plans. Its construction suitably involves staff and governors at appropriate stages. Its progress is regularly monitored by senior staff and governors. Satisfactory strategies are in place for constructing and monitoring the budget and resources are used effectively. There is some measurement of cost effectiveness. Spending is measured against local authority averages and all significant purchases are only made after obtaining a number of quotations. A recent example of this was the purchase of new computers. All spending is carefully linked to the school's educational priorities. Examples of this include the decision to create an extra small class in a year group where there is an unusually high proportion of pupils with behavioural difficulties, and the creation of the nurture group. Specific grants – including those provided for staff training and those to support pupils with special educational needs – are spent well. There is a finance policy in place, but this does not provide enough guidance for detailed financial management at either the strategic or day-to-day levels.

53. Levels of teaching and non-teaching staff are both high, which means that pupils have the advantage of relatively small classes and are well supported. All staff are enthusiastic, well trained and effectively deployed with the result that standards are rising and pupils' behaviour is well managed. Resources for learning are satisfactory. They are good for English, mathematics and information and communication technology, but there are weaknesses in those available to support religious education. Key Stage 2 is currently housed in part of a now disused secondary school sited some distance from the rest of the school. Despite the efforts of staff to make the interior more attractive, the exterior is very shabby and is not conducive to positive learning. During the inspection a physical education lesson took place in a damp and dirty sports hall. This environment detracted from the quality of the lesson and had a significant negative impact on the attitudes of the pupils towards the activities they took part in. A new building for Key Stage 2 is appropriately under construction and will be ready for occupation in the Spring.
54. Both the nursery and reception classes are well staffed by experienced teachers, well qualified learning support assistants and an experienced nursery nurse. The school has an integral nursery classroom that is spacious and very well resourced. The outdoor play area adjacent to the nursery provides a secure, well-equipped area that effectively meets the needs of the young children's physical and creative development. Unfortunately, during the time of the inspection, the nursery garden and outside area was in the process of reconstruction and development. Consequently the space available was somewhat restricted. The reception class however, is small and does not have its own appropriate secure designated outdoor play area. Consequently the provision for appropriate and frequent enough free physical play with push and pull toys, wheeled toys and climbing apparatus is insufficient for these children.

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

The governors and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes further:

- Further raise standards in all the core subjects by:
  - a) continuing to implement the strategies that are already proving successful in English, mathematics and science;
  - b) ensuring that the results of assessment are more consistently used to inform planning and the work pupils are provided with in lessons;
  - c) ensuring that the progressive development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology is appropriately planned for;
- ensuring that the statutory requirement to teach swimming is met.

(paragraphs 1,2,21,35,97)

In addition to these key issues there is a number of less important weaknesses which the school should consider for inclusion in the action plan. These include raising the governors' role in focused monitoring of the curriculum and improving attendance (paragraphs 14, 52 )

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	87
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
1	26	52	21	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	299
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		150

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		213

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
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	17	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	13
	Girls	15	21	19
	Total	25	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (61)	78 (63)	78 (70)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	18	16	16
	Total	29	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (63)	68 (70)	68 (80)
	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	28	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	13
	Girls	14	8	10
	Total	24	16	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (22)	33 (16)	48 (29)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	7	8
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	19	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38	28	34
	National	70	72	79

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	297
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	16	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	448

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.7
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	809739
Total expenditure	782882
Expenditure per pupil	2045
Balance brought forward from previous year	2539
Balance carried forward to next year	29396



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	386
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	33	0	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	0	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	50	4	4	0
The teaching is good.	58	34	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	29	29	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	38	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	38	13	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	67	25	8	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	50	8	0	9

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

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

55. The school has maintained the good provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection. Children enter the nursery with well below expected levels of attainment in all areas of learning. A significant number of children in the nursery demonstrate delayed speech and language development. Many children enter the reception class with low-level skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception class and broaden and consolidate their knowledge in all areas of learning. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of the children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in their physical and creative development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world their attainment is below expectations. The overall good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.
56. Children are admitted to the nursery for either a morning or afternoon session after their third birthday. Most normally transfer to the reception class to start full-time schooling at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, 44 children attended the nursery on a part-time basis and of the 21 children in the reception class 12 were under five.

Personal, social and emotional development.

57. Nearly all the children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception class many are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This shows very good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. The inspection took place in the autumn term when the children had only recently been admitted to the nursery. These young children settle quickly in their new surroundings and confidently explore the variety of activities on offer. They learn to share, take turns and are helped to show consideration for others. In both the nursery and reception class, children show interest in the planned experiences provided for them and show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out the activities. Most children in the reception class play and work together well. Already, they settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. The children are enthusiastic about their learning, for example, when making vegetable soup in the nursery, or when finding out about the change in balloons after inflating them in the reception class.
58. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is comprehensive for this element. The well-established routines and caring nature of the provision allow all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. The adults also promote children's personal independence effectively. For instance, in the nursery, the well-defined areas of interest and orderly storage system ensure children have consistent access to materials and equipment. At 'circle time' the children learn to share their experiences with others, listen to one another and develop a positive self-image, when for instance talking about what they can do. During discussion times, the teachers draw out children's responses and encourage them to put up their hands when they want to speak and to listen when it is not their turn to speak.

#### Communication, language and literacy.

59. On entry to the nursery, a significant number of children show delayed development in their speech and language. Many children use gestures such as nods and shakes of the head to communicate their feelings and answers to questions or only use familiar words in isolation to identify what they do and do not want. Few children construct simple statements. They make good progress and by the time the children end the reception year many are approaching the recommended early learning goals, although they still remain below expectations. All adults use talk to good effect and are good active listeners. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the nursery and reception teachers, the nursery nurse and learning support assistants talk to the children individually and in groups to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. In the nursery, very good use is made of 'Oli-Bear' to encourage the children to talk. 'Oli' goes home with the children on a rota system and they are encouraged to include him in their home life. On returning him to school, the child is invited to describe to the rest of the class what Oli' did at home. Most children listen attentively and in the reception class become more confident in their use of a growing vocabulary when participating in discussions. All children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with adults. In the reception class the children begin to hear and say the initial sound in some words, and know which letters represent some of the sounds, such as 'b' for ball, 'c' for cat and 's' for snake. The children begin to realise that print carries meaning by learning the names of shops in their own vicinity. However, as yet, many do not recognise familiar words in a simple text. Books are well displayed and all adults find opportunities to tell and read stories to the children and help them to acquire the concept of a word by using labels and pointing them out in the environment and text. Elements of the literacy strategy are introduced gradually in the reception class, and used well by the teacher to meet the needs of the children. A good understanding of phonics is developed through effective word, sentence and text level work using well-known stories and rhymes. Children are provided with good opportunities to take part in role-play situations and develop an increasing awareness of writing for a purpose whatever their stage of development. For example, in the nursery, the children make marks on paper in the Post Office to 'write' and send a letter to Mummy. Supplies of paper, pencils and crayons are readily available for children to use. By the end of reception, although some children use writing as a means of recording and attempt to write a sentence by using the captions around the classroom, the majority still need an adult to act as a scribe for them.

#### Mathematical development.

60. Children in the nursery achieve well below expectations in this area of learning. Staff create many opportunities to introduce children to mathematical language, for example sorting and matching items in the home corner and ordering the number 'puppies' by size. The children are provided with a wide range of practical experiences, such as matching colours and shapes, building with bricks, fitting together geometric shapes and weighing buckets of sand. Mathematical development is promoted effectively through the use of number games and songs both in the nursery and reception class. The more formal activities for mathematics are effectively introduced to the children in the reception class through the framework for teaching numeracy. This area of learning is well taught and although attainment in mathematics is below expectations by the end of reception, the children make good progress in their number recognition. Most children are beginning to count to ten and can mentally carry out simple number operations such as 2-1 and 6-1. The higher achieving children can relate addition to combining two groups of objects within ten, name the simple shapes of triangle, circle, square and rectangle and can recreate a repeating pattern with two shapes. However, for many children their use and understanding of mathematical language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers or 'heavier' and 'lighter' to compare two items by weight is below expectations for their age. The work is well planned both in the nursery and reception class and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them and develop their mathematical ideas through play situations, as in the Post Office when handling money or playing with different sized containers in the water.

#### Knowledge and understanding of the world.

61. Children enter the nursery with a low level of general knowledge. Although most children show curiosity in their surroundings, many need encouragement to explore, investigate and ask questions. Taking themes such as, 'Growth and Changes', 'All About Me' and 'Autumn and Night', activities are well planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms an important part of the work and children are encouraged to be observant and describe and what they see. For example, the nursery teacher made very good use of toy telephones to encourage the children to talk to her and tell her about the items she was packing in a case when going away on holiday. In both the nursery and reception class the children are provided with a range of opportunities that encourage exploration, observation and discussion. For instance, in the nursery the children look at the changes that occur to vegetables when making vegetable soup. They build on this knowledge well, and in the reception class the children use their senses to explore and describe the way bread changes when it is toasted, and make comments such as 'it looks brown' and 'it feels hard'. They plant runner beans, sort objects into groups that are attracted to magnets and those that are not and draw and write about what they see. However, overall, the children achieve below expectations for their age by the end of reception as only a few can talk about where they live, know about their immediate environment or have an understanding of change over time. A wide range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. The children quickly learn to use the computer, as demonstrated in the reception class, when they used the mouse to drag items on screen in order to dress the Teddy and click on the icons to cause different things to happen on a paint program. The children are introduced to a suitable range of cultures and religions. For example, they use resources in role-play that reflect an appropriate range of cultures, such as dressing up clothes and dolls and gain an awareness of their own beliefs, and those of others, by celebrating festivals such as Christmas, the Chinese New Year and Diwali. The quality of teaching overall is good, lessons are planned well and all adults use good questioning skills to develop children's knowledge and understanding.

#### Physical development.

62. Children in the nursery achieve broadly what is expected for children of this age. They show increasing control and skills when using the wheeled toys outdoors and stop when necessary. Unfortunately, during the time of the inspection, the nursery garden and outside area was in the process of reconstruction and development. Consequently the space available was somewhat restricted. However, planning and photographs show that a wide range of activities are provided for the children that include climbing apparatus, balancing equipment and a trolley with bats and balls. When in the hall for movement lessons, the children run, jump and show a developing awareness of the space around them. In the reception class, children's physical development is in line with expectations for their age and they make good progress. However, they do not have their own appropriate secure designated outdoor play area. Consequently the provision for appropriate and frequent enough free physical play with push and pull toys, wheeled toys and climbing apparatus is inadequate for these children. The reception teacher does however ensure there is regular access for short periods of outdoor play in the nursery area and school playground and provides physical education lessons in the school hall. In the lesson observed, children participated well and used the space safely, avoiding others. They showed that they can balance on one leg, hop on either foot, hop over a rope safely and hop in and out of a hoop. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their finer manipulative skills in both the nursery and reception class. For example, in cutting and sticking paper to make pictures, using pencils for dot-to-dot pictures and modelling with scrap materials. They are also provided with a wide range of malleable materials including play dough and bread dough. Consequently, by the end of reception, the children demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of paintbrushes, construction sets and puzzles. Children are also taught skills such as cutting to help them gain safe control of these finer movements. Teaching is good overall.

#### Creative development.

63. This area of learning is well taught and by the end of the reception year most children will attain the early learning goals. Children start from a fairly basic level of skill when they enter the nursery and make good progress through a wide range of experiences in art, music, story making and imaginative play. The home corner is very popular and gives good opportunities for imaginative role-play. In the nursery they play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme and delight in acting out scenes such as, preparing a meal and taking the baby for a walk. They enjoy using paint and with support learn about mixing colours, such as green and orange in order to match the colour of leaves. Many children enjoy playing with the 'small world' toys to act out their own stories and show pleasure when singing nursery rhymes and action songs together. The children's response to music and dance is very good. For example, in a movement lesson, the nursery children captured the mood of an autumn day by twirling as leaves dropping from the trees and making the sound of the wind with their voices as they moved. The nursery classroom is a stimulating environment for children to work and this aspect of learning is very well supported by the sensitive intervention of the teacher, nursery nurse and learning support assistant. Children in the reception class show an appropriate appreciation of the effects of different colours, shapes and patterns. They make paper teddies and with help use split pins to attach the arms and legs to the body to show movement. The reception classroom is however, less spacious than the nursery classroom and does at times place restrictions on the resources that can be made available for the children to explore, experiment and express their creativity freely.

## ENGLISH

64. Standards in English are below the national average both for pupils by the age of seven and for pupils by the age of eleven, in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above at the age of seven was below the national average in the most recent national tests, in 2000, and also in teacher assessments. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at the age of eleven was also below the national average in the 2000 national tests and teacher assessments. In 1999 the standards of pupils at the age of seven, in Key Stage 1, were well above those of pupils in similar schools nationally. The Key Stage 1 results declined in 2000 in terms of average points scores, but the overall trend in Key Stage 1 attainment since 1998 has been upwards. The results of pupils at the age of eleven in 1999, in Key Stage 2, were well below the average for pupils in similar schools nationally. However, these results improved considerably in 2000, and there has been a marked upward trend in standards at Key Stage 2 since 1998. Pupils in 2000 achieved standards in English which were better than in several other subjects in the school. Before 2000, girls achieved lower standards in English than boys by the age of eleven, but the evidence of the inspection showed that there is no longer a significant difference in attainment between the genders by the end of the key stage.
65. Pupils begin Key Stage 1 with standards in all areas of English which are below expectations for five-year olds nationally. By the age of seven they make sound and often good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding and their command of basic English skills, although progress is variable. Pupils with special educational needs sometimes make good progress in developing their skills, particularly when they are supported in the classroom. Overall they make satisfactory progress. Between the years of five and seven pupils develop their listening skills at a faster rate than their speaking skills. Pupils learn to listen both to their teachers and to each other. However, the majority of pupils have poorly developed speaking skills. They have a limited vocabulary and, whilst making simple responses, are mostly unable to sustain a conversation. Pupils develop their reading skills, but in terms of their accuracy and fluency, the majority of pupils are below national expectations for their age group at the end of the key stage.
66. Pupils make considerable strides in the development of their writing skills by the age of seven, although many remain below expectations for pupils of this age nationally. Pupils produce class stories, which are collated and word processed by their teachers. By Year 2 many pupils are capable of more sustained writing. For example they produce poems on the themes of 'colour' and 'Autumn', showing a developing interest in language. Some higher-achievers begin to

develop joined-up writing and learn to structure their writing better, for example giving a beginning, a middle and an end to their stories and sometimes using concept maps to develop their ideas. However, weaknesses in the spelling of common words, in punctuation and in grammar remain a major weakness in pupils' writing. Even higher-achievers are often inconsistent in applying the technical skills of writing; whilst many average- and lower-achievers still do not form their letters correctly.

67. Most pupils by the age of eleven continue to make sound and, sometimes good, progress in developing both their knowledge and understanding and their ability to apply basic English skills. They continue to make good progress in developing their listening skills, but their speaking is still restricted by a limited vocabulary. As they move up through the school, pupils read a greater range of books. Whilst many enjoy reading, and can talk at a basic level about the plot and their likes and dislikes, only a minority of higher-achievers reads with appropriate fluency or accuracy. Few read with expression.
68. During Key Stage 2 pupils continue to broaden the range of their writing, and produce a good variety of work by the age of eleven. For example, pupils in several year groups wrote informative accounts of a visit to the school by somebody representing an owl sanctuary. Pupils learn to write more detailed character profiles and write short dialogues and plays on themes like the 'Three Little Pigs'. Factual writing includes instructions on how to make a sandwich or a cup of tea, whilst some pupils write effective reviews, for example of a Sherlock Holmes story. During Year 4 pupils learn comprehension and summarising skills when investigating an author. By Year 6 pupils have a more secure understanding of the distinction between formal and informal writing. They also learn to write arguments 'for' and 'against', for example when considering the Eurolink. They learn to extract the key points from a passage of text and they make comparisons between the work of different authors such as Terry Pratchett and C.S. Lewis. Pupils learn about different genres through activities such as the rewriting of the opening of a Victorian novel. Considerable emphasis is put upon extending grammatical understanding. For example, higher-achievers learn to appreciate the difference between the use of active and passive verbs. However, the work of these pupils still shows inconsistencies in spelling and punctuation, whilst average- and lower-achievers continue to make frequent errors in these areas, and also in grammar.
69. The quality of teaching overall in English is good. It is always at least satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and is good or very good in four out of five lessons. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is always at least satisfactory and is good or very good in five out of six lessons. The good or very good teaching is characterised by several features. During the literacy hour, teachers show good subject knowledge, which is conveyed to pupils by patient explanation and is accompanied throughout by careful questioning which is used both to extend and to reinforce pupils' understanding. A typical example was a Year 2 lesson in which the teacher patiently used a big book with the class in order to emphasise the importance of settings, and the approach was characterised by a judicious and skilful combination of explanation and questioning, targeting particular pupils whose progress was being monitored. Pupils were then divided into groups for grammar and spelling work, some of which involved the use of computers, and with all pupils being given tasks appropriate to their particular level of ability. Resources are used effectively to motivate pupils, as in a Year 1 lesson in which pupils were given a range of word games in order to extend their knowledge and understanding of phonemes. Another strong feature of the teaching is the praise used to motivate pupils and give them confidence. The use of praise, along with the good relationships which exist in lessons, makes pupils want to do well, and behaviour and attitudes are good or very good in most lessons. Therefore, although many of the lower-achieving pupils work slowly, they do want to do well and stay focused on their activities. The best teaching is marked by high expectations of both behaviour and pupils' capabilities, as seen in a Year 6 lesson in which the teacher maintained a purposeful working atmosphere throughout. In teaching the difference between active and passive verbs, the teacher constantly made the pupils *explain* their responses, carefully monitored pupils' progress and ensured that all responded. She also encouraged pupils to check both their own work and those of their classmates. Pupils responded well to this challenging approach and as a result made good progress in their understanding. Teachers mostly use learning support assistants effectively

both to help monitor pupil progress but also to directly support particular pupils during group work sessions. Where this happens, pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make good progress in extending their English skills. This was seen in another Year 6 lesson when learning support assistants played a key role in helping the teacher to explore ways of helping lower-achievers extend their vocabulary.

70. The English co-ordinators at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 provide committed and effective leadership in addressing the school's priority of raising standards and expectations in English. For example, since the previous inspection, assessment has been significantly developed, so that pupils now have specific targets for improvement. Strategies for providing additional literacy support are in place, and these are having the effect of raising standards. Several teachers have developed their teaching skills by following the advanced literacy course. Regular assessment tests are now carried out, and form the basis for targeting individual pupils who now know what they need to do in order to improve their standard in literacy, whilst underachievers are specifically tracked. Teachers' planning is now more effectively monitored, and plans are in place to increase the co-ordinators' role in the monitoring of teaching. The quality of resourcing has also improved since the previous inspection, and this is helping pupils to achieve higher standards. Activities such as writing workshops and book days are contributing to a raising of standards and literacy is used well to support learning across the curriculum in subjects such as, for example, history. Therefore, particularly in light of the improved standards now evident at Key Stage 2, improvement in English has been good since the previous inspection, which identified English as being an area of serious weakness.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. National test results for the Year 2000 indicate that standards at Key Stage 1 as measured by average points scores were lower than the previous year and below those of similar schools. This can be attributed to the differences in the cohorts. However, a higher percentage reached the expected Level 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 showed a significant improvement, particularly in terms of the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, although the school did not quite reach the target it had set for itself and results are still below those of similar schools. There are an increased number of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 and this too has an impact on national test results.
72. Most pupils make sound progress in mathematics. They enter Year 1 with attainment below that expected nationally and, although the standard of work of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is still not in line with that expected nationally, most make sound progress. The older pupils of average ability in the key stage, for example, have a secure knowledge of the appropriate language of mathematics, can count and order numbers up to one hundred and are able to use number bonds up to ten in addition and subtraction of slightly larger numbers. Most can count in tens up to one hundred. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional solids. More able pupils, for example, understand place value of digits in numbers in the hundreds, can describe some of the properties of plane shapes and solids and can measure lengths in standard groups. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is below the standards expected nationally. Many of the older pupils have a sound understanding of number and the four operations. Their understanding of decimals is developing and pupils of average ability for example can round off numbers with one decimal place to the nearest whole number. More able pupils understand the equivalence of simple fractions, percentages and decimals. However questions related to the equivalence of simple fractions and fractions expressed in their simplest form are not as well understood. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 is the same as noted in the previous inspection but it has improved in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are well and consistently supported by class teachers and support assistants and they make good progress relative to their individual attainments.
73. The pupils' competence in numeracy is well supported and used across other curriculum areas. In history, pupils in Year 3, for example learn about and use Roman Numerals and in Year 6, during their weather report project, pupils read scales and represent data in bar and pie charts and graphs using information technology as well as hand drawn graphs. Information technology

is used satisfactorily throughout both key stages to support pupils' number skills. Able pupils in Year 6 for example, use a programme which reinforces their fraction work and in Year 3 average ability pupils reinforce their recall of the two times table. Initiatives like the Numeracy Day, where pupils work in mixed age groups on a variety of activities also enhances the provision well.

74. The quality of teaching overall is good. In Key Stage 1 it ranges from satisfactory to very good and overall it is good. In Key Stage 2 the picture is similar. The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers generally display good subject knowledge and all sessions are well planned and organised, ensuring that lessons run smoothly and with minimum time wasted. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is good and this generally ensures that pupils of all abilities are provided with relevant interesting and challenging activities. However, this is not always the case in a few sets in Key Stage 2 where the same tasks are given to all pupils, the more able pupils in the class completing the work quickly and the less able needing a great deal of help from support assistants. Generally, however, work well matched to needs ensures that pupils respond in a motivated manner and that they enjoy lessons. In a well-structured lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils of all abilities worked hard to reinforce skills in money handling while playing money games in pairs or small groups. All pupils practised similar skills but at a level suitable to their individual attainment. Some of the games had been made by the teacher to fulfil pupils' needs. In a minority of lessons, less able pupils in the class or set cannot complete worksheets without extra support in the early stages of their individual work, as these are not suitably structured for the attainment levels of the pupils.
75. In effective lessons teachers work hard to develop the pupils' understanding and use of appropriate mathematical terminology and skills by building into the lessons opportunities for pupils to speak about what they are learning. In a Year 5 lesson based on doubling and halving numbers, for example, the teacher provides good opportunities for the pupils to describe to her and the rest of the class what strategies they had used to help them in their calculations. In the most successful lessons, the teachers organise a good range of activities and there is purposeful activity throughout. Pupils respond well to this and it is particularly evident in Year 6 lessons where pupils themselves are motivated to do as well as possible in this last year of primary education. In all lessons any misbehaviour or lack of concentration by pupils is dealt with pleasantly and effectively so that the pace of lessons is maintained. Mental arithmetic sessions are well organised and teachers use a satisfactory variety of methods to support pupils' learning. In a number of sessions, however, pupils are inactive because teachers use much of the time asking individual pupils questions. Limited use of methods like number cards, which would enable whole class response to take place, is evident. The use of open-ended questions, which would enable pupils of different abilities to respond at their own level during mental sessions, is also limited.
76. In general, teachers' questioning of pupils is clear and pupils' strengths and weaknesses are well known. Consequently pupils of all abilities are involved in class question and answer sessions, and this they do with appropriate confidence. However, the quality of review sessions at the end of lessons is variable and in some cases these lack effective pupil input. Good relationships exist in all classrooms and because of this pupils are able to accept constructive criticism as a normal part of their learning process. Classroom assistants are well deployed to provide good support for less able pupils when they are working individually or in small groups. Overall pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Homework supports learning satisfactorily.
77. The curriculum complies with national guidelines and the National Numeracy Strategy is well established. This and the emphasis on improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills are already having a positive impact on progress. The subject is very well led by enthusiastic co-ordinators, who regularly monitor teachers' planning, teaching and pupils' work. The assessment procedures are good and have improved since the last inspection. The results of these too are monitored and analysed well in order to track pupils progress and inform teaching. As a result of this, for example, the school recognised the need to highlight pupils' recall of multiplication



tables more in future teaching. The school has already introduced the use of group targets and this is working well. It is planning to develop this further by the introduction of individual pupil targets in future years. The accommodation is adequate and teachers in both key stages have worked hard to provide a stimulating environment for the pupils by the effective use of classroom and corridor displays. Resources are good and have been maintained since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

78. In the most recent teacher assessments of seven year olds, results were well below average, a decline on the previous year when they were close to average. In the tests of eleven year olds (SATs), results were very low. However, the school has adopted a number of strategies to raise standards in the subject. These include detailed analysis of assessment results in order to identify relative weaknesses, the tracking of the performance of a sample of pupils as they proceed through the key stages and revision strategies which have been built into the overall planning structure. Although still in the early stages of implementation, these – combined with good teaching – are already beginning to have a positive effect, and the percentage of pupils who reached the expected Level 4 in Year 2000 was significantly higher than in the previous year. The findings of the inspection are that standards are currently still below average at the end of both key stages, but that they are improving throughout the school. Achievement is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2.
79. Young Key Stage 1 pupils can tell the difference between pushing and pulling as different forms of force, although most have difficulty in making appropriate predictions. By the end of the key stage, the majority are aware that sound becomes fainter with distance. Many have a developing understanding of electrical polarity. Pupils are frequently unable to show what they have learned because of their poor language skills and limited vocabulary. By Year 4, pupils can carry out a simple investigation and record their findings successfully. The majority have a developing appreciation of the need for scientific ‘fairness’ and are able to make relevant predictions. Some higher attaining pupils are capable of designing their own investigation to solve a scientific problem. By Year 5, most pupils have a good understanding of the concept of sound waves and know how to change the pitch and volume of a sound by, for example, varying the length of a vibrating object. Many pupils in Year 6, who are successfully taught science in ability sets, have a satisfactory knowledge of a wide range of scientific information. For example, they have a good understanding of the functions of a range of human organs and appreciate what plants need to survive. Some are clear about the need to change only one variable in a valid scientific experiment.
80. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Teachers make good use of resources and present information in a way that makes lessons interesting for the pupils. A good balance of different activities within a lesson ensures good pace of learning and, again, stimulates the pupils. Discipline is a particular strength of the teaching. It is positive and effective, resulting in good behaviour and relationships. Many lessons seen during the inspection contained a good level of challenge for the pupils. In some, however, tasks were not closely enough matched to the aptitudes of different groups of pupils in a class and the design of investigations was too teacher directed. This meant that some pupils – particularly the higher attaining – were prevented from developing their scientific skills to the fullest extent. Pupils’ attitudes in science lessons are always at least good and are frequently very good. They are interested in the work, being particularly enthusiastic about practical activities. They contribute well to discussions. They focus well on tasks and co-operate successfully in pairs and groups, sharing resources appropriately. Overall behaviour is good.
81. There are thorough planning procedures in place for science. These successfully ensure that scientific knowledge is successfully taught in a progressive way as pupils proceed through the school. Very thorough and relevant end of group tests to monitor and record the progress of individual pupils have been implemented. The results of assessment, however, are not always used to inform planning at the classroom level. The co-ordinators have had a significant role in influencing the rising standards in the subject and are very clear about future developments needed to raise these yet further. During the inspection, the overall provision for science was

enhanced for the younger pupils through their having the opportunity to experience a visiting 'Life Education Centre.'

## **ART**

82. Standards in art meet the national expectation at the end of both key stages, a finding similar to that of the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, successfully use a range of media to produce representations of the human eye. By the end of this key stage, they effectively mix red and yellow to produce different shades of orange and use this to create a series of Autumn leaves. They have many opportunities to explore the form of major European artists and replicate this in their own work. Year 1 pupils construct well-executed pictures in the style of Mondrian and Kandinsky using crayon, cut out strips of paper and a computer program, while Year 2 pupils successfully produce pictures which are influenced by those of Eduard Munch. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils produce fine still life pencil drawings of shoes and some paintings in the mode of Ancient Egypt – although the results of the latter are somewhat immature. Year 6 pupils explore the work of William Morris and the engraver Dore. They can differentiate between the various styles of different Victorian artists and produce simple press prints of their own to demonstrate these. There was little evidence during the inspection of three-dimensional art, work in textiles or the study of artists from non-European cultures. Examination of planning and discussions with staff indicate that these areas have either been covered in the recent past or are planned for later in the current academic year. The curriculum is well enriched through a weekly art club where, for example, pupils explore clay and some more advanced art techniques.
83. In the small number of art lessons seen during the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, and was good overall. Ideas were presented to the pupils in a stimulating way with a good use of relevant resources. This maintained interest and promoted learning. Discipline was very positive and successfully supported both behaviour and relationships. Methods were appropriate, although sometimes a preliminary discussion went on too long, slowing down pupils' pace of learning. The pupils enjoyed the lessons. Even the youngest were keen to contribute sensibly to discussions. They co-operated well with one another and focused well on their tasks. Behaviour in lessons was consistently good.
84. Recent and appropriate planning structures for art are in place – but assessment strategies are still informal. The recently appointed co-ordinator suitably monitors teachers' plans and is shortly to audit resources for the subject. She has a clear view of where the provision now needs to be developed further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. The attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The progress of pupils in both key stages, including those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are used to planning products and evaluating the success of their designs. Pupils in Year 1, for example, produce bird feeders, which they put to good practical use in the school grounds. Pupils gain sound knowledge of mechanisms and how they can be used in different ways. Pupils in Year 2 design and make wheeled vehicles, which can be moved when pushed, using card, dowel and wooden wheels. They understand the appropriate language associated with this, for example axis, body and chassis. The resulting vehicles indicate an appropriate range of expertise in design, reflecting the attainment levels of the pupils. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they have experienced working with a broad range of materials and understand that there are a variety of aspects, sometimes conflicting, to be considered in the design process. Pupils in Year 3, for example, appreciate that when designing packaging that one of its functions is protection of the product it encloses, so rigidity is important. Pupils use their developing skills and knowledge in the support of other subjects. In Year 5, for example, pupils make models of volcanoes as part of a geography topic. Pupils experience a range of techniques and this enables them to make choices in order to produce a required effect as, for example, in Year 4 where they produce pop-up pictures in cards and small

books using a variety of different methods. Pupils throughout the key stages are well accustomed to the procedure of 'plan, do and review' - both on an individual and group basis. Pupils' progress is soundly supported by the concentrated experience of design and technology 'subject days', when they experience working in mixed age groups. No examples of food technology were seen during the week of the inspection, but evidence indicates that this is covered satisfactorily.

86. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection so no judgement on the quality of teaching can be made at this key stage. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall. Lessons are well planned and organised and time is used well. Relationships between class teachers, support assistants and pupils are good, enabling teaching and learning to proceed efficiently. Support assistants are used effectively to enable less able pupils to access the tasks set. In the most successful lessons good use of resources and well-structured introductory sessions help the pupils in the planning of their products. In Year 3, for example the teacher disassembles a number of cardboard containers and highlights the position of the labelling on the nets and this ensures that the pupils labelling is the correct way up on their containers. In Year 5, pupils examine and play a variety of instruments from other cultures and analyse how the sounds are produced before designing instruments themselves. Pupils approach evaluation sessions maturely and both individual and group sessions are an effective and integral part of the learning process. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, individual pupils confidently discuss the problems they encountered in the construction of their pop-up cards or books in a whole class session. Other pupils ask questions and make sensible suggestions about their designs in response. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
87. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and the curriculum complies with national requirements. A sound subject policy is in place and a national scheme of work is in the process of being implemented. Teachers' lesson plans are monitored regularly. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The assessment process is still limited however. The subject co-ordinator is in the process of developing this and an improved system is being trialled in Year 1 this year.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88. Standards in geography in Year 6 and Year 2 are similar to those found in most other schools. Judgements are based on a small sample of lessons at Key Stage 2, planning for the subject, work on display and a sample of the pupils' work that was available for inspection. The evidence provided, and conversations with teachers and pupils, indicates that pupils at both key stages have had an appropriate range of opportunities for geography over the past years. Overall, pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of geography and in the development of geographical skills and vocabulary. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations.
89. By Year 2, the pupils accurately mark the countries of the British Isles on a map and use an atlas to pinpoint the approximate location of Gravesend and Margate. Through their study of Tocuaro, a village in Mexico, pupils learn about the main physical and human features and develop an appreciation of the similarities and differences between life in their own locality to that of the villagers in Tocuaro. Pupils carry out a survey of the places they have visited on holiday, compile a block graph and find out which is the most popular place. They group them into types of environments, such as town, countryside and seaside and write about the differences. The higher attaining pupils use a key to label physical features of a seaside area and identify specific buildings, such as a pier, promenade and huts that are found only at the seaside. Year 1 pupils draw a sketch map of the route Red Riding Hood took to her grandmother's house and mark features such as the a hill, stream and wood. Their knowledge and understanding of directional language increases as they learn words such as, through, up, under and over to describe the route taken by Red Riding Hood.
90. By Year 6, pupils know and understand how hills are represented on maps by contour lines. They know that the numbers on contour lines tell them how far above sea level they are and use appropriate geographical vocabulary to describe the physical features of hills such as, plateau,

steep slope and valley. They show an understanding of why scales are used and learn how to work out what a distance on a map represents in reality. Pupils make good progress in their mapping skills. For instance, in Year 3, pupils understand the directions on maps and use two-figure co-ordinates to locate features on a map. By Year 6, most pupils can use a four-figure grid reference to locate features and many progress to using six-figure co-ordinates. Pupils learn to use and interpret maps and plans on a variety of scales and to use the symbols and keys. In learning about the weather, pupils in Year 6 use appropriate instruments such as, a barometer, wind vane, rain gauge and an anemometer to measure and record the evidence of the variation in weather over a period of time. They use information and communication technology to present the information in the form of block and line graphs and pie charts. However, there is little evidence of pupils using CD ROMs or the Internet to extract geographical information.

91. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers provide a good variety of experiences for pupils to increase their learning by discussion and exchange of ideas. This was illustrated well in a Year 6 lesson when the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to work in pairs and take some responsibility for their own learning to work out how to measure items in the classroom in preparation for drawing a plan of the classroom, to scale. In doing this, the teacher enabled the pupils to carry out a geographical enquiry and skilfully introduced them to the use of plans and scales. In this lesson the pupils worked at a good pace, applied themselves well to the task and were actively involved in their learning. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' understanding of appropriate geographical vocabulary. Most of the evidence indicates that pupils make good progress in lessons. However, in one lesson seen during the inspection where the teaching had some shortcomings, the activity provided was insufficiently matched to meet the needs of all pupils, in particular the higher attainers. Consequently, these pupils did not make the progress expected of them. However, overall, teachers use effective strategies for the management and organisation of lessons that enable most pupils to succeed, including those with special educational needs. Assessment is usually in the form of encouraging pupils with praise and making notes of their progress, but there is no formal recording of the skills achieved. No teaching was observed at Key Stage 1.
92. The recently appointed co-ordinator has had little time to carry out the management of the subject. She is however, enthusiastic and has already identified relevant priorities for future development. Currently she is rewriting the scheme of work after evaluating and monitoring the previous scheme. New text books have been purchased to provide teachers with support in their planning and groups from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines have been included in the school's programme for geography. These changes fit in well with the new curriculum and achieve an appropriate balance between imparting information to pupils and providing opportunities for them to learn through enquiry. Resources have improved since the last inspection with the inclusion of good quality atlases and a range of maps. The school in general makes appropriate use of visits in and around the local environment to extend the pupils' geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum of the older pupils is greatly enhanced by the opportunity to take part in residential visits to places as far away as Paris.

## **HISTORY**

93. Standards in history are in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages. By the age of seven, pupils have a developing ability to distinguish between aspects of life in different times, for example education in the Victorian era, which they compare with today. They begin to develop an understanding of the difference of objects such as toys between 'then' and 'now'. Higher-achievers show an awareness of some of the reasons for change between the Victorian era and today. Lower attaining pupils make limited progress because they have such weak writing skills and limited communication.
94. Pupils by the age of eleven show levels of knowledge and understanding in line with the expectations of pupils nationally in this age group. They continue to develop their knowledge of everyday life in the past, for example in Roman Britain, ancient Egypt and Tudor times. Imaginative exercises are used to help increase understanding of the past: for example older

pupils write play scripts of Henry VIII's first meeting with Catherine of Aragon. The work on the Victorians shows a developing sense of chronology, partly through the use of timelines. Pupils also learn to investigate the importance of individuals like Darwin, Joseph Lister, Rowland Hill and Lord Shaftesbury. An understanding of attitudes is encouraged through the use of strategies such as having pupils write "letters" from factory inspectors, investigating conditions of factory work. Similarly imaginative activities include "newspaper headlines" written by pupils about the outbreak of the Second World War.

95. It was not possible during the inspection to observe any history teaching at Key Stage 1. In the limited number of lessons observed at Key Stage 2, the teaching was always at least satisfactory and was good in two out of three lessons. The good teaching is characterised by particular factors. Teachers encourage pupils to do independent research, as seen in a Year 5 lesson when pupils investigated aspects of town life in Tudor England. Learning support assistants are used to assist pupils with special educational needs in these activities, enabling them to make sound progress. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to extend and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding, as seen for example in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were learning about mummification techniques in Ancient Egypt. Where aspects of otherwise good teaching are unsatisfactory, low-level tasks are given to higher-achievers, who consequently do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable.
96. The history co-ordinator is recently in post and has not yet developed effective monitoring or assessment procedures. However, the previous inspection found standards to be below national expectations. These standards have risen, and therefore there has been good progress in history since the previous inspection.

#### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

97. Little direct teaching was observed during the inspection week. Therefore, judgements are based on observations of pupils using computers, the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school, a portfolio of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers.
98. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is below national expectations. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection report, and is partly due to the school's focus on literacy and numeracy during the past three years, and the lack of time allocated for teachers to keep pace with the advances in information communication technology. However, a government initiative to update teachers' skills and knowledge will address this issue within the coming year. At the end of both key stages the majority of pupils are familiar with simple keyboard and mouse operations but are generally insecure with their computer skills and knowledge. They are not always prepared to experiment should anything go wrong. For example, two Year 2 pupils were observed having difficulty putting a floppy disk in to the computer and were unable to access their work once the disk was inserted. In Year 6, a pupil was observed to accidentally switch off the computer she was using. She was unable to switch it back on again and recover her work without adult support. She was also insecure with the correct procedures for switching the computer on and off. Other Year 6 pupils observed were not confident with the procedures for changing the font, style and colour of their word processed stories and plays, and were unaware that the spell check was set for American spellings rather than English spellings. Many pupils draft their work on to paper and then correct it before copying it on to the computer rather than using the power of the word processing programs to draft, check and correct work. In some classes, the learning support assistants, rather than pupils, type pupils word processing work in to the computer.
99. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching. In a majority of classes, teachers or learning support assistants were observed to load programs for pupils rather than encouraging the pupils to do so. However, as a direct result of teachers' enthusiasm and personal knowledge, Year 1 pupils can word process simple sentences, use the highlight command to make the program read out their work, print their work unaided and save their work on to a disk. Sound use is made of programs and CD-ROMs to support other areas of the curriculum. At both key stages numeracy and literacy programs are used to support work in English and

mathematics. For example, Year 6 pupils use a data-handling program in geography to record the weather every day for a month and then produce pie charts and line graphs of their results. In Year 4, pupils use a music CD-ROM to research different instruments. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, good use was made by the class teacher of a video camera to encourage pupils to present their work in the style of a news report. In the nurture group, good use is made of an instamatic camera; for example, to photograph happy and sad faces as a link to a science topic on healthy living. The school has recently adopted a nationally approved scheme of work but this has yet to make an impact on standards. Planning was identified as a weakness in the previous report and has not yet been fully addressed. It still does not identify skills' progression. Short term planning does not make specific reference to the skills to be taught in a lesson. In some classes the objectives for the week are clearly displayed above, or next to, the computer for pupils to refer to, but this is not done in all classes. A whole school system of record keeping of skills' acquisition is not in place and individual record keeping is not always an effective planning tool to meet the needs of the different abilities in each class. All pupils have a floppy disk on which to save their work. Pupils' response to information technology is good. They are well motivated, well behaved, and co-operate with each other.

100. There is a good ratio of computers and printers to the number of pupils in each year group but their use is inconsistent. The systematic use of computers in a minority of classes is underdeveloped. Good use is made of computers in the nurture group and the focus group. Displays around the school, and in the computer area of each class, do not always celebrate the use of computers. The use of e-mail and the Internet by pupils is underdeveloped. The subject is soundly managed overall. Recently, a second co-ordinator has been appointed to develop a co-ordinating team. Both co-ordinators are aware of the areas for development in the subject and these have been identified in the school's development plan. However, they have few opportunities yet to work alongside colleagues in order to observe lessons and to support and monitor teaching and learning.

## **MUSIC**

101. Standards are broadly in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection. Young Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory recall of the sounds associated with various instruments. By the end of this key stage, pupils have a good control of dynamics and tempo when playing a range of untuned percussion instruments. At Key stage 2, most pupils can perform with a basis rhythm, although only a few understand elements of conventional notation. By Year 6, most pupils can identify different repetitive melodies within a piece of music and successfully interpret simple notation using body percussion. The quality of singing is good throughout the school.
102. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Lessons are generally well prepared and contain an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils. Relationships and discipline are very good – with a positive effect on pupils' attitudes. Methods are suitably varied. In the best lesson seen during the inspection, very well delivered material inspired the pupils to want to succeed and to improve their performance. Most pupils enjoy their music lessons. They participate enthusiastically in practical activities and contribute politely to discussions. Behaviour is good overall and is sometimes very good.
103. The co-ordinator has an appropriate role in monitoring planning in the subject and has recently audited resources. She is aware of the subject's developmental needs. There is a recently constructed policy for music. Planning is largely based on national guidelines, but there is little formal assessment of individual pupils' attainment yet.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

104. During the week of the inspection, only games and gymnastics lessons were observed. Dance and swimming lessons were not seen. Therefore, judgements are based on a limited observation of different areas of the physical education curriculum, teacher's planning and discussion with teachers and pupils.

105. By the end of both key stages, standards are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the previous inspection report. Pupils are able to perform with suppleness, control and with safety, a range of basic skills; for example, balancing and travelling in a variety of ways and directions. They demonstrate sound control when linking actions together. In Year 1, pupils are able to sequence 'big' and 'small' movements across the floor or on apparatus. In an excellent Year 1 lesson observed, the pupils were highly motivated by the class teacher to travel in big and small ways across benches and boxes. Their response was excellent, with pupils challenging themselves to ever more difficult ways of moving. The teacher sensitively supported those pupils who were nervous of travelling along a high box or an upturned bench. By Year 2, pupils show appropriate skills and control when passing a ball to a partner and when sequencing movements. By Year 6, pupils can satisfactorily put together a sequence of slow, fast, high and low movements. They are developing sound control when passing a ball to each other with their hands or feet; for example, in a Year 6 rugby skills lesson, pupils were observed given increasingly challenging tasks to develop co-ordination when passing a rugby ball to each other at increasing distances.
106. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and results in good progress by pupils. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and results in satisfactory progress by pupils. The majority of teachers set a good example by dressing appropriately, but this is not consistent throughout the school. The majority of pupils dress appropriately. At both key stages teachers or classroom support assistants are prepared to demonstrate skills and activities. For example, in a Year 5 gymnastics lesson the learning support assistant demonstrated the techniques of forward and backward rolls. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher and learning support assistant demonstrated how to pass a rugby ball whilst moving around the hall. In both lessons the demonstrations challenged the pupils to do as well or better. All lessons include the essential elements of a warm up and a structured cooling down period. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers select pupils to demonstrate good work. However, only in a minority of lessons were the demonstrations used by the teacher as a further opportunity for a teaching and learning opportunity and only in a minority of lessons were pupils encouraged to discuss and constructively evaluate each other. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The learning support assistants give them good support.
107. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education. Overall, their attitudes and behaviour is good. In a Year 5 lesson observed the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils was very good and in a Year 1 lesson observed pupils' attitudes and behaviour was excellent. However, the behaviour of the focus group during a football skills lesson was unsatisfactory. Although the teacher had good strategies for behaviour management, the impact of the echo in the large hall being used made it difficult for the pupils to hear and understand the teacher and each other.
108. Pupils at both key stages have access to a large hard play area and field. The Key Stage 2 playground is uneven and cracked and markings are faded. At the time of the inspection, the Key Stage 1 field was not in use because it was too close to the construction site of the new Key Stage 2 building. Both key stages have the use of an adequately sized hall. The Key Stage 1 hall is in the main building and is well equipped. The Key Stage 2 hall is a separate building. It is adequate in size. At the time of the inspection it was not heated, which meant pupils were cold during the lessons observed. Key Stage 2 also has the opportunity to use two large sports halls, which are on the site of the neighbouring derelict secondary school building. Although the halls are spacious, the acoustics are poor and have a detrimental impact on learning. In lessons observed in both halls, the echo made it difficult for pupils and teachers to communicate at a distance and, in one lesson, made it difficult for the class teacher to sustain good discipline. Both halls are dirty and shabby and show signs of neglect. Old and faded posters are peeling off the walls of the smaller hall. During one lesson observed in the larger hall, rainwater seeped through the ceiling and left puddles on the hall floor. This was a potential health and safety hazard. During a lesson in the smaller hall, three pupils not involved because of minor illnesses were required to work in the entrance hall for the majority of the lesson. They were unsupervised

for most of the time. The floor was dirty and there were no suitable tables and chairs for the pupils to use. This was also a potential health and safety hazard.

109. There is a good range of extra curricular activities for physical education, which include cricket, dance, football, gymnastics, netball and, in the summer, athletics, rounders and tennis. Residential visits also enhance the subject. The co-ordinator monitors planning but has had no opportunity to observe lessons or to work alongside colleagues. The school's scheme of work has recently been supplemented by a nationally approved scheme. However, there is no formal assessment of skills' progression. The school is not meeting its statutory duty by ensuring swimming lessons are provided Key Stage 2 pupils. Swimming lessons have not taken place for two years.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. By Year 6, standards of attainment are below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Kent. This is in line with the judgement of the previous inspection. However, the attainment of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are in line with the expectations for their age. This reflects the recently introduced new scheme of work that provides clear guidance for teachers. However, this has not yet had time to make an impact on the standards the older pupils achieve and consequently there are still gaps in their knowledge and understanding. No religious education lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and there was insufficient recorded evidence to make any secure judgements on the pupils' attainment or the quality of teaching at this key stage. However, the documentation and discussion with a very small group of pupils indicates that there is a progressive coverage of religious education. Younger pupils are presented with work that enables them to have an understanding of their own personal worth and they are introduced to religious education through appropriate stories, artefacts and symbols used in religious traditions.
111. Year 6 pupils know that the Bible is a special book of the Christian faith and that it consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. They understand the significance of symbolism contained in the Christmas story and the celebrations associated with Holy Week and Easter. They have appropriate knowledge of how Christians, Jews and Hindus celebrate special times such as Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali. However, pupils in Year 6 are insufficiently aware of the importance of sacred writings and the role of the founders and key figures in religion. By the age of eleven, most pupils have an understanding of their relationships with other people and discuss the concept of making choices. However, their ability to express their religious ideas and talk about their beliefs on how they can influence personal behaviour is at a superficial level. This was noted in the previous inspection. At the lower end of Key Stage 2, however, the pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of the main practices of Hinduism and the importance of religious places to Christians such as Bethlehem. They are learning to understand and use religious terminology such as pilgrimage and talk about the reasons people have for making a pilgrimage, drawing on their own experiences. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the Jewish and Christian marriage ceremonies and develop a greater knowledge of the symbols associated with the commitment of marriage. They do however, find it difficult to understand how the term commitment is related to God. Younger pupils know about the Hindu festival of Diwali, when it is celebrated and talk about what the Festival of Light means. They understand that light represents good and identify a number of special occasions where light is used to celebrate events and festivals. They have visited the local church, and pupils in Year 5 know of the use and significance of the artefacts in the church.
112. The quality of teaching and learning in the few lessons observed is at least sound and in some lessons it is good. Teachers have adequate knowledge to teach the Agreed Syllabus. There is sufficient direct teaching about the relevant religions and teachers offer good opportunities for discussion. In the best lessons, introductions hold the pupils' attention and the interesting range of activities and use of resources reinforce the learning objectives of the lesson. In these lessons, the quality of teaching is based on successful questioning skills that enable the pupils to show the extent of their knowledge and understanding through discussion. As a result the pupils are interested and well motivated. Relationships are good and in general the pupils and



teachers respect one another's views and ideas. By following the scheme of work, in conjunction with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, pupils are having suitable experiences.

113. The curriculum is satisfactorily planned with sufficient breadth of teaching related to the teaching of major world religions. The policy and scheme of work have recently been updated and provide a good framework for the subject. Opportunities for religious education are also well provided for in circle time, assemblies and personal, social and health education. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the responsibility for religious education and has appropriate plans to further develop the provision for the subject. Resources are at present inadequate to cover the national guidelines that have been adopted by the school. Sound links are maintained with the local church, but there have been few visits to places of worship for faiths other than Christianity. Effective use is made of visitors drawn from the local churches to conduct assemblies. A very good example was observed during the week of the inspection when a preacher from the local Evangelical Church talked to the pupils about remembering. His approach was very appropriate to the pupils and brought alive with his own experiences. A real sense of wonder and respect was engendered. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.