

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DITTON INFANT SCHOOL**

Ditton, Aylesford

LEA area: KENT

Unique reference number: 118858

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Webster

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston  
8402

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 225060

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pear Tree Avenue Ditton Aylesford Kent
Postcode:	ME20 6EB
Telephone number:	01732 844107
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Goodright
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Vivien Johnston 8402	Registered inspector	English English as an additional language Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	Characteristics of the school How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? Staffing, accommodation and resources
Mrs Caroline Marden 9537	Lay inspector		Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr David Major 27709	Team inspector	Mathematics Science History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs Marianne Harris 23288	Team inspector	Foundation stage Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr Martin Andrews 2503	Team Inspector	Art Design and technology Geography Music Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ditton Infant School is a foundation school which serves a suburban area to the west of Maidstone. It currently has a total of 119 pupils on roll, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. It is smaller than other schools, and the number on roll has been falling gradually in recent years. Twenty children were admitted full-time to the reception class in September, and a further group of children are expected to join a second reception class in January. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, the overall profile is above average. Two pupils speak English as an additional language; they are not at an early stage of learning the language. Nineteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is a broadly average proportion; generally, their needs are not severe. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is above average.

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

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. The school provides a happy, caring environment in which pupils' personal development is promoted well, particularly in the moral and social aspects. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and good for the children in the reception class. The results in the national tests were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics in 2000. At the end of Year 2 last summer, standards in most subjects were average. The standards now attained by pupils in Year 2 are better than those attained by Year 2 pupils at this time last year. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although they still do less well in writing than they should. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, as is the value for money it provides even though the cost per pupil is above average.

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

- The children in the reception class are doing well because good teaching provides them with varied, stimulating activities.
- Pupils enjoy school, and their behaviour is very good.
- Teachers promote pupils' moral and social development very well, and provide a caring environment.
- The school provides parents with good information about how well their children are doing and what they are learning.

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

- Standards in writing, through giving pupils more demanding tasks that involve them in writing independently and at greater length.
- Pupils' opportunities to learn and use skills in information and communication technology, both as a subject and in other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers' use of marking and other assessment information to help them raise standards by ensuring the work matches pupils' needs, giving pupils better guidance on how to improve, and tracking how well they are doing.

*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 June 1998. The four key weaknesses that were identified then have been tackled purposefully and successfully. The school's improvement is good in two of these areas: the curriculum, and communication and partnership with parents. Satisfactory improvements have been made in the leadership and management of the school, and in the quality of teaching. The school has maintained its strengths in the areas of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the way it takes care of them. Improvements have been made in a number of other areas, including the provision for pupils' moral and social education, computer resources and the school grounds. In addition, the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully.

The school is aware that, although a great deal has been achieved over the last two years, much remains to be done. Many of the improvements are too recent to have had a major impact on the standards pupils attain, but they are beginning to rise. The trend in results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 is rising, despite the fall in results in 2000. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement in the last two years. It is now well placed to improve further the quality of education provided and raise standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	B	A	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	A	A	C	C	
mathematics	C	B	C	D	

The school's results in the tests at the end of Year 2 have risen gradually over the last few years. They were high in 1999 but fell in 2000. This difference reflected the increase in the number of low-attaining pupils in that year group. The school did not meet the targets it had set for 2000 but is likely to meet the targets for 2001. Results have consistently been higher in reading and writing than in mathematics, with a strength in the results in reading. Boys and girls have done equally well.

The results of the teacher assessments of science have been below average. Standards are improving. In science, standards are rising because of more effective teaching, and the work of the pupils now in Year 2 is in line with what is expected for their age. Standards are average in most other areas of the curriculum, including writing and mathematics, and above average in speaking and listening, reading and physical education. The evidence indicated that standards in information and communication technology are at the expected level for Year 2 pupils' age, but that pupils do less well than they should because they have had too few opportunities to use computers. Standards in writing are also lower than they should be, because teachers have set undemanding work. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in the other areas of the curriculum.

The children in the reception year are achieving well. Most will attain the early learning goals for the foundation stage by the end of the school year, and many are likely to exceed them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school, and are interested and keen to be involved. They work willingly and well. This contributes to making the school a happy place.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are co-operative and sensible, follow the school rules, and play well together. Their behaviour in the dining hall is exemplary. Occasionally, pupils are restless in lessons because the pace of the activities is too slow. No pupils have been excluded in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are co-operative and helpful to each other and to adults. They are friendly and very polite. They respond well to being given responsibilities, which they take seriously. They have a good understanding of right and wrong.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with national figures. The rate of unauthorised absence is low. Pupils are punctual and so lessons start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed, and in 13% it was very good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory, as it is of numeracy. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory, mainly because teachers have not expected pupils to write independently and at sufficient length. The teaching of reading is satisfactory. The most consistently effective teaching was observed in the reception class.

Teachers managed lesson activities purposefully, skilfully involved all pupils in whole-class discussions, gave them encouragement and praise, and had high expectations of their behaviour and attentiveness. The pupils responded well to these strengths in teaching, by working hard and willingly. In general, teachers meet the needs of all in their classes satisfactorily, including pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes, teachers did not match the work well enough to pupils' needs by setting work at the right level of challenge, or did not teach pupils the skills they needed to carry out the task well. These weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons led pupils to lose concentration. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly, but give the older pupils too little guidance on how to improve in future. Too little use is made of homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. The children in the reception class learn well as a result of the good teaching. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning is satisfactory overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum for the children in the reception year is good. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught to pupils in Years 1 and 2, together with religious education. Insufficient attention is paid to the requirements for information and communication technology, particularly in other subjects. The curriculum is broadened by the addition of personal, social and health education lessons. No clubs or activities are provided outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. When planning their lessons, teachers take account of the targets in the pupils' individual education plans. The pupils are given the necessary support in lessons, and a special group activity helps those with language difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Teachers consistently and effectively reinforce high standards of moral and social behaviour. Satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, mainly through assemblies, religious education, music and art.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good provision for pupils' wellbeing and promotion of good behaviour. The school places a high priority on caring for its pupils. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers have kept too few records of how well pupils have done, and so are not able to ensure that the work matches their needs and to track their progress over time.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has worked hard to develop a good partnership with parents, and has introduced many improvements. Some parents would like still closer liaison, however. Annual reports are good, and parents receive high quality information about what their children are learning each term.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher led the school's response to the last inspection purposefully, and has successfully managed many changes. The deputy headteacher manages her areas of responsibility confidently. Subject co-ordinators have suitable plans for developing their subjects. Satisfactory leadership and management overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive, know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are keen for it to improve. Through recent training, they have a secure understanding of their role. They are not active enough in asking questions about how well the school is doing, and setting it a clear educational direction. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's plan for its improvement is well structured, and is based on a sound evaluation of how well it is doing. Monitoring of teaching and standards has recently been introduced, but the findings have not been systematically used to help staff improve teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has sufficient staff, good accommodation and satisfactory learning resources. It applies the principles of best value well through careful financial management. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework.</li> <li>The information about how well their children are getting on.</li> <li>How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>The leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>The activities provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with some of the views expressed by parents. These are that their children like school, but that they are given insufficient homework and no opportunities to take part in activities outside lessons. However, the inspection team found that the school has greatly improved the information given to parents and that it tries hard to work in partnership with them. The team also found that the way the school is led and managed is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Initial assessments show that the overall standard the children have attained when they enter the school is above that expected for children of their age. The children's achievement is satisfactory. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals, and many are likely to exceed them. This is an improvement, compared to the findings of the last inspection two years ago, and reflects the good teaching now provided to the children in the reception class.
2. Results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 have risen over the last few years, to a high point in 1999. In that year, the results in reading and writing were well above average, in comparison to the results for all schools nationally and for similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). The results for mathematics were above the averages for all schools and for similar schools. In 2000, the results fell. This reflected the increase in the number of low-attaining pupils in that year group. However, the overall trend for the last five years remains one of improvement, broadly in line with the national trend of rising results. Girls and boys have generally attained equally well. In 1999 and 2000, the school's results in reading were better than in writing. Results in mathematics have generally been lower than for reading and writing. There have not been national tests for science, but the teacher assessments in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average. In 2000, the teacher assessments were well below average in the proportion attaining Level 2 and above, though the proportion assessed at Level 3 was above average.
3. Teachers have predicted how well the pupils will do in the national tests, based on their previous work, and these predictions have largely been accurate. For instance, the school was aware that the results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 would be much higher in 1999 than in 2000, and expects a rise in 2001. This is likely to be achieved as the evidence of pupils' written work showed that the standard attained by the pupils now in Year 2 is generally higher than that attained by the pupils in Year 2 at this time last year. The school's targets for results in the national tests were not met in 2000. This was because of several changes in the pupils on roll, which happened after the targets were set. The targets for 2001 are challenging but achievable.
4. The evidence showed that at the end of the summer term 2000, standards were average in writing and mathematics, and in the other subjects for which written work was available. These included geography, history, and religious education. Little evidence was found of pupils attaining at above-average levels, but equally there was little evidence of low attainment. The evidence indicated that overall standards in science were below average.
5. The available evidence indicated that in many subjects, including mathematics and science, the work of the pupils now in Year 2 is better than that of last year's Year 2 pupils at this stage in the year. This is partly because of the difference in overall ability of the year groups, and partly because a broader, more challenging curriculum is now being taught more effectively. This is a recent improvement, and is enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils who are now in Year 2 are attaining standards that are average for their ages in almost all subjects, including mathematics and science. Standards in English are above average overall, with a strength in pupils' reading and speaking and listening. Standards in writing are average, because teachers have had low expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' written work in English and in other subjects.
6. Standards are above average in reading because the skills are taught carefully, mainly through the literacy hour. In writing, most pupils learn to spell simple words and to construct sentences and short accounts accurately, but standards are lower than they should be because the pupils have not been taught to organise their writing into longer pieces. Pupils' handwriting is legible but not neat enough. In mathematics, pupils become confident in their use of number, and develop good mental strategies for working out sums. In science, pupils have a sound understanding of the work covered, and are beginning to use the principles of scientific enquiry in their investigations.

7. Of the other subjects, pupils do best in physical education. Here, standards are above average for pupils' ages. For example, Year 2 pupils showed good rhythm and co-ordination in a dance lesson. Standards are average in the other subjects, but the evidence indicates that pupils would have done better in information and communication technology (ICT) if they had had more opportunities to use computers.

8. The achievement of the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The support they are given enables many of them to attain the nationally-expected level by the end of Year 2. The pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve satisfactorily.

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

9. Pupils enjoy school, as parents commented in their responses to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting before the inspection. The children in the reception class have settled in quickly, and are already working confidently. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are also interested in learning, and are willing participants in all aspects of school life.

10. The children in the reception class are very co-operative and well behaved. For example, although a wet lunchtime during the inspection meant that they did not get their usual chance to use up their energy by playing outside, the children worked co-operatively and well all afternoon. In all the lessons, they tried hard and were eager to please. In class discussions, they listened quietly to each other as well as to their teacher, and patiently waited for their turn to speak.

11. The behaviour of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is also very good. Pupils move about the school in a very orderly, sensible manner, such as when going to the hall for assembly. They know and follow the school rules and routines. For instance, on a wet morning, pupils were observed coming into their classrooms quietly, hanging their coats up and quickly settling on the carpet with a book to read until morning school started. During wet playtimes, they were purposefully involved in pencil and paper activities or in playing games with the lunchtime supervisors. No pupils have been excluded from school in recent years.

12. Pupils have well-developed social skills, and their personal development is good. They are polite to adults and each other. In lessons and the playground, they show concern for others' needs and feelings. They showed exemplary behaviour and table manners in the dining hall at lunchtime. Relationships are very good. Pupils work together co-operatively in lessons, sharing resources and discussing what they are doing. They help each other willingly. This helps their learning. They are very clear about right and wrong behaviour. For instance, pupils in Year 2 responded thoughtfully to a discussion on what to do about bullies, in a personal, social and health education lesson. Their comments and the simple rule they devised for dealing with bullying showed a mature understanding of the moral and social issues. Some parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection commented that bullying occurs. However, no inappropriate behaviour of this kind was observed during the inspection. In particular, pupils played well together in the playground and were very considerate of each other during lessons.

13. Pupils are proud to carry out the responsibilities they are given. The reception children and the pupils in Years 1 and 2 can be trusted to take the register and dinner money to the office. The older pupils were quick to ensure that the class rota for doing this was followed fairly. Some Year 2 pupils are monitors at the lunch tables, and carry out their duties in a business-like way. In lessons, pupils collect and tidy up resources helpfully, when asked to and voluntarily.

14. Attendance is satisfactory as it is in line with the national figure for primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is low. Pupils' regular attendance contributes to their achievement being satisfactory. The small amount of unauthorised absence is mainly due to parents not telling the school of the reason for their children's absence. Punctuality during the week of the inspection was generally good, in spite of heavy rain and flooding in the area.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, and in half of the lessons it was good or better. In the reception class, the teaching is good overall: in the lessons observed, it was always good or better, and it was very good in three-fifths. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. In two fifths of the lessons, it was good or, occasionally, very good. Most of the good teaching was seen in Year 2.

16. The teaching of the children in the reception class has many strengths. These include careful planning of lessons, high expectations of the children's learning and behaviour, consistent management of classroom activities, and good relationships. The classroom environment is stimulating, and is enhanced by displays of the children's work.

17. In Years 1 and 2, the purposeful way teachers managed lesson activities, encouraging and supporting pupils' learning with praise and guidance on how to do better, was a strength in the teaching of many lessons. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attentiveness, and pupils responded very positively to this. For instance, they sat quietly on the carpet for whole-class discussions, and joined in with their own ideas and comments when teachers asked them questions. Teachers were skilled in involving pupils of all levels of ability in these discussions. They also gave clear explanations of what the pupils were to learn, and in practical sessions often gave good demonstrations. The activities were usually well paced and so pupils worked hard throughout the lesson, with good interest and concentration. When the teaching was good, teachers usually made effective use of assessment. For instance, in a physical education lesson the teacher gave good evaluative comments which helped Year 2 pupils to develop their dance movements. Later in the lesson, they had to watch and appraise other pupils' performances, supported by the teacher's questions. In many lessons, teachers made effective use of learning support assistants to work with groups of pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy activities. Sometimes, parents gave valuable help too. This enabled teachers to provide well for the varied needs within the class, and contributed to pupils' learning and progress.

18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally well planned and matched to their individual needs. A satisfactory range of approaches and materials is used to engage the interest of these pupils. For example, games and a tape-recorded story were used to help pupils in Year 1 to improve their ability to listen and to develop eye contact, and a collaborative activity using cards was provided to help pupils sequence numbers. Teachers and learning support assistants draw pupils into whole-class discussions effectively by asking them questions, helping them to maintain their concentration and correcting misunderstandings. Sometimes, however, the learning of these pupils is unsatisfactory because they are asked to complete the same worksheets as the rest of the class, which they find too difficult.

19. In some lessons that were judged satisfactory overall, some weaknesses were seen. These usually arose because the teacher had not anticipated pupils' needs well enough. For example, sometimes pupils in Year 1 were expected to sit and listen for a very long time. At first, they were attentive but gradually they tended to lose concentration and become restless because of the slow pace. However, as soon as they were set tasks they could do, such as in group activities in the literacy hour, they returned to work willingly. Teachers plan well for what pupils are to do, but sometimes pay too little attention to teaching the skills and understanding the pupils needed to focus on in order to improve the quality of their work. In a history lesson, for example, the teacher directed the activities competently, but missed opportunities to reinforce key vocabulary and the concept of chronological sequence in a time-line. Marking is satisfactory in that teachers check pupils' work regularly and add some comments and praise, but the older pupils are given too little guidance on how to improve in future. Teachers make too little use of homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. For instance, reading books are taken home only once a week. Parents would like more use made of homework, and the inspection evidence supports their view.

20. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, as is the provision for pupils to learn to read. The teaching of writing has weaknesses. This is largely because teachers depend too heavily on the use of worksheets, which provide undemanding work. The sample of written work from the previous school year showed that pupils in Years 1 and 2 had spent too much time on easy tasks such as cutting and sticking. This is less of a weakness for the pupils now in Year 2 as teachers'

planning showed that a wider range of writing activities is being set, in English and in other subjects. However, teachers miss opportunities within other subjects to teach pupils the skills of reading and writing. A lack of overview planning for ICT contributes to teachers making unsatisfactory use of computers to support and extend pupils' learning.

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

21. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving the curriculum. It has moved away from a topic-based approach, in which pupils' learning was planned in relation to a theme for each half term, to a subject-based approach. This means that the school's curriculum planning is now focused on teaching the appropriate knowledge and skills in each subject. The schemes of work that have been adopted cover the requirements of the National Curriculum in all subjects. Religious education follows the local Agreed Syllabus. The school has reviewed the time allocated to each subject, and has improved the balance between subjects. Some weaknesses remain in the provision for ICT, particularly in the opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. This aspect of ICT is not planned for. Greater emphasis is now placed on problem-solving, investigative and creative skills within the curriculum. Teachers' planning makes satisfactory provision for high-attaining pupils, and pupils with special educational needs are no longer regularly withdrawn from lessons for additional support. The curriculum is now sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs of all pupils.

22. The school has implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy successfully. However, curriculum planning for English has not been developed for the areas that are not covered within the guidelines in the literacy strategy. For example, the school does not have a planned programme for the time spent in reading at the end of the day, nor for the time given to oracy (speaking and listening). It also has no overall planning for developing pupils' skills in reading and writing in other subjects. This contributes to the weakness in pupils' achievement in writing.

23. Numeracy skills are well taught within mathematics lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills in mental mathematics, and for practical activities and investigations. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum are not planned for.

24. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not offer any clubs or other activities outside lessons to enrich its curriculum. Many parents would like some activities to be introduced, and the inspection team agrees that this would enhance the educational opportunities open to pupils. Visits support learning in some subjects. For example, as part of their work in history the pupils in Year 2 visit Tonbridge Castle, and the younger pupils visit the Kent Museum of Rural Life. Pupils also visit West Malling Country Park for first-hand experiences in science and geography.

25. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given additional support within lessons. When teachers or support assistants do occasionally work with individuals or small groups outside the classroom, the work covered involves the same topics as the class lesson. The weekly 'social use of language programme' group session is a good feature of the provision for the pupils whose special needs relate to language difficulties. Pupils have well-structured individual plans with very precise targets. Teachers take account of the targets when planning and preparing work for these pupils. Their progress in meeting their targets is recorded when they receive additional support.

26. In keeping with its aims, the school provides an education designed to enable pupils to develop their potential physically and mentally. The programme for personal, health and social education covers a good range of relevant topics. Teachers make links between stories, class discussions and circle time activities each week. This helps them cover well issues such as personal safety and bullying. Pupils' personal and social development is very well promoted. Health education is effectively taught through science lessons, and appropriate provision is made for sex education and for teaching pupils about the misuse of drugs. The school also ensures equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils.

27. Some links with the community extend pupils' learning. For example, talks by visitors contribute to pupils' study of Ditton village in history and geography. Clergy from the local church regularly take part in assemblies. Visits from the local fire brigade and the road safety officer contribute to aspects of pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has good links with the parish council, and has participated in tree planting projects and an annual fun day in Ditton. Links with local playgroups are developing. To help Year 2 pupils make a successful move to the junior school, a good programme of visits is organised towards the end of the summer term. Few curricular links between the two schools have been maintained, but the school has plans to develop them.

28. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has remained satisfactory since the last inspection. Its provision for their social and moral development has improved, and is now very good.

29. Teachers promote spirituality principally through religious education lessons and assemblies, as at the time of the last inspection. Prayers are said each day, in assembly and before lunch. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to reflect upon their own feelings and those of other people. For example, in an assembly pupils were encouraged to think about why it is important to value their friends. Topics of this kind also promote the pupils' social and moral awareness well. Pupils learn about significant religious festivals from Christianity and other faiths. For example, in a religious education lesson on Hinduism, pupils in a Year 2 class lit divas and thought about how Hindus would use them.

30. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is closely linked. Teachers consistently and effectively reinforce high standards of moral and social behaviour. Turn-taking and sharing are encouraged, and teachers give pupils many opportunities to work together. Pupils explore issues such as bullying and how to be a good friend in assemblies and during personal, social and health education lessons. They have been encouraged to think about right and wrong, for example when they drew up rules for the classroom and playground. Teachers expect pupils of all ages to behave responsibly and to carry out the tasks allocated to them in a mature way, such as taking the register and dinner money to the office. The older pupils are given more responsibilities, for example being dinner monitors in Year 2. This supports their social development well because they learn to look after others.

31. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to learn about their own culture through music and art lessons, which include some opportunities to learn about aspects of other cultures. For example, Year 1 pupils have recently looked at Aboriginal art and created their own paintings in a similar style. The school has few resources to support pupils' multicultural development, although a good display of Aboriginal art and musical instruments enhanced the environment during the inspection. Visitors such as theatre groups and poetry readers enhance the provision for pupils' cultural education through literacy activities.

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

32. The school places a high priority on caring for its pupils and ensuring their health, safety and welfare. The procedures for child protection are well established. As the school is relatively small, all the staff know the pupils and their needs well.

33. Good behaviour is promoted by all staff. They encourage the pupils to behave appropriately and to become increasingly aware of the effect their actions may have on others, for example through exploring themes such as 'friends'. This is done through discussion as and when the need arises, and more formally through timetabled sessions such as personal, social and health education lessons and circle time. Pupils are rewarded with praise, in class and in assemblies. Staff are consistent in applying the rules for behaviour which have been agreed and are prominently displayed. Teachers also encourage pupils to attend school regularly.

34. The recently introduced written tracking system for pupils' personal development is particularly good. This enables teachers to record the pupils' reactions to various situations in the personal, social and health education programme. However, teachers have started to use it only this term, too recently for the inspectors to judge its impact.

35. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' special needs are identified systematically through testing, when pupils join the school. Their individual education plans are well constructed, and are revised every term. Parents are kept informed of how the school is supporting their children, through attending review meetings. They are encouraged to express their views on their children's progress plan, and sometimes discuss how they can help at home. The school receives a good level of support from outside agencies. Regular advice is received from the educational psychologist and learning support service, which helps the teachers to plan suitable work for the pupils.

36. Assessment records are insufficiently detailed, and are not consistent throughout the school. Teachers keep records of pupils' achievements in English and mathematics, but there are no effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in science, information and communication technology or other subjects.

37. At the time of the last inspection, teachers' use of assessment information to inform their planning was unsatisfactory. It is still a weakness. The best practice was found in the reception class. Here, teachers carry out day-to-day assessments of pupils' work well, and use the information to guide their lesson planning. Teachers of pupils in Years 1 and 2 make daily notes on the back of planning sheets in English and mathematics, evaluating individual pupils' learning. This is a good arrangement, except that the teachers do not make enough use of the information when planning their lessons. Few other records are kept of how well pupils have done. Throughout the school, teachers make too little use of assessment data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching, the children's achievement, and curriculum planning.

38. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. As a result of the lack of assessment records, the school has been unable to track pupils' progress over time and to make sure that they achieve the standards they are capable of. A system for tracking the progress of individual pupils has recently been adopted, but this relies only on the end-of-year assessment of pupils' achievements in English and mathematics. It does not include any interim tests or other assessment information. The school has analysed pupils' answers from Year 2 national test papers to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning, but has not analysed the results of different groups of pupils to compare their progress. In Year 2, teachers set targets for ability groups in literacy and numeracy, but these are not changed sufficiently often and do not yet take account of the needs of individual pupils.

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

39. Since the last inspection, the school has worked very hard to develop a good partnership with parents. Many improvements have been introduced. The partnership is now good, although some parents expressed a wish for still closer liaison.

40. Parents report that their children enjoy school and that the school promotes good attitudes and values. Parents are confident that teachers know the pupils very well. The inspectors agree with these views, expressed at the meeting before the inspection and in responses to the questionnaire. Some parents also commented that a number of areas could be improved. They would like the teachers to provide more homework, some activities outside lessons, and further information about pupils' progress. Some parents also raised concerns about the leadership and management of the school. The inspectors agree that more homework and extra-curricular activities should be provided, but found that the information about children's progress is good and that the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory.

41. Teachers give parents good information about how well their children are doing, through annual reports and termly consultation meetings. The annual reports contain clear statements about what pupils know and can do. In addition, some reports include judgements on how much progress pupils have made in the year. The reports also include information on what needs to be done to improve the standard of pupils' work. Teachers and parents liaise well about pupils' reading, through the record books that are sent home each week.

42. The school now provides parents with high-quality information about what their children are learning each term, with the aim of enabling parents to support their children's learning. Curriculum

pamphlets are sent out each half term, and give very good information about what is to be taught. Occasionally, meetings are held for staff to inform parents about aspects of the curriculum. Most recently, these meetings have been about literacy and numeracy. The school also holds open afternoons, when pupils can show off their work to their parents.

43. The school encourages parents to help. They provide valuable and valued support in lessons, especially in literacy and numeracy. For example, a parent skilfully encouraged children in the reception class to guess the names of two-dimensional shapes from other children's descriptions. A fund-raising committee of parents has given the school about £3000 per year. The money has been used to improve computer resources, and is now going towards improving the outside environment and the development of the pond area.

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

44. The headteacher provides good leadership. She has managed the school's response to the last inspection purposefully. The four major areas identified then as needing improvement have been tackled systematically, and other matters have also been dealt with. The staff have shared her commitment to raising the quality of education provided, and have worked hard to achieve this. As a result, the school has made satisfactory improvement overall in the last two years, with some areas in which the improvement is good.

45. The school's commitment to and capacity for further improvement are good. The headteacher and staff are aware of the areas in which further work is needed, and have begun to deal with most of them. The headteacher has established most of the systems needed to provide a good quality of education, and is now in a position to ensure that these lead to improved standards. For instance, the curriculum is now better planned, and the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced successfully. This has contributed to the improved quality of teaching.

46. The headteacher has introduced a good system for monitoring the quality of teaching and standard of pupils' work. This includes the scrutiny of pupils' written work and lesson observations. These activities have contributed to the improvements in teaching, but are not carried out regularly enough and with sufficient rigour. They are not systematically followed up by action to ensure that teachers improve their practice. As a result, weaknesses such as in the teaching of independent writing have not been tackled, although they have been recognised.

47. Teachers with management responsibilities have become more effective and are providing satisfactory leadership and management. Most teachers with responsibility for co-ordinating a subject have a good understanding of their subject's strengths and weaknesses. They have had time to look at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and to observe lessons. From these monitoring activities, they have identified what needs to be improved. These issues have been discussed by the staff, but the subject co-ordinators have not followed them up systematically by initiating changes to teaching and the curriculum, with a view to raising standards.

48. The deputy headteacher organises the planning and support for pupils with special educational needs well. She monitors how well they are taught through discussions with teachers and a termly scrutiny of their lesson planning. Other monitoring activities such as sampling pupils' work and observing teaching have been introduced, but are unsystematic. The deputy headteacher still does not have sufficient opportunities to exercise a leadership role within the school, for example by working with the headteacher on monitoring its strengths and weaknesses. Her management role has improved considerably since the last inspection, although further development is needed to enable her to have sufficient impact on the work of the school.

49. The governing body is strongly supportive of the school, and is eager to see it improve. Since the last inspection, governors have received training, and have re-organised their work. They now have a clearer understanding of their role and a better knowledge of the school. For example, they now receive information on the curriculum through presentations by teachers. Governors visit the school more regularly, and give the full governing body reports on their visits.

50. The governing body is becoming more directly involved in determining the priorities for the school's development. For example, governors joined teachers on a consultation day, to draw up



the school improvement plan. This resulted in a well-constructed plan with a strong focus on raising achievement and improving the curriculum. However, the methods used by governors to monitor the work and progress of the school are still unsatisfactory. They have begun to discuss the results of tests, and use this information to make comparisons with other schools, but do not do so in sufficient depth. For example, they have not discussed whether there are differences in the achievement or attendance of boys and girls, and they had little involvement in setting the school's targets for literacy and numeracy. They do not question and probe the information provided by the headteacher and other staff sufficiently, in order to form their own view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This limits their impact in setting priorities and assessing how well the school is improving.

51. The school makes good use of its resources, and financial management is good. The governing body makes use of the detailed financial information in making decisions over spending. The budget is closely linked to the school improvement plan, and spending is monitored systematically. Applications for special grants and bids are managed well, resulting in savings. Best value principles are applied to financial decisions. For example, a range of costed options was considered when contracts for refuse collection and catering arrangements were reviewed. This enabled the governing body to make well-informed decisions. The most recent audit of the school's financial systems judged that there was a good level of financial control. The policy of the governing body is that two classes in each year group will be maintained for as long as possible, despite the falling numbers entering the school. Fewer children are being enrolled because of demographic changes locally. A high budget surplus is being carried forward for this purpose. The use of new technology in the management of the school is limited to routine administration and budget management. It has not been extended to the management of information about pupils' performance, to assist the governors and headteacher in setting academic targets.

52. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff for its needs. Their expertise has been developed by in-service training, which has helped to raise the quality of teaching. Resources for learning are satisfactory, having been improved in the last two years. For example, the new library has attractive books for reading. The school accommodation is good. It has sufficient classroom space, a large hall, and very good playground and grassed areas outside which are enhanced by the new pond and maze.

53. The school responded well to the findings of the last inspection. The leadership and management of the school are now satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and governing body work together more closely. The partnership with parents is much improved. The strengths identified by the last inspection have been maintained. The school's ethos is still caring, and staff are committed to enabling all pupils to do well. Pupils are now given stronger encouragement to succeed academically. Their achievement is satisfactory, and the children in the reception class do well. Results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 are improving in line with the national trend, despite the fall in 2000, and the standard of work being carried out by pupils now in Year 2 is higher than that of last year. The value for money provided by the school has improved, and is now satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise standards and further improve the quality of education provided, developing the work the school has already started, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) improve the teaching of writing [20, 22, 67, 69]. This will involve:
  - introducing whole-school planning for teaching writing, in English and other subjects;
  - giving more opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length;
  - ensuring that the skills that are taught through worksheets and in handwriting exercises are applied in pupils' independent writing.
- (2) improve the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) [7, 20, 21, 95-98]. This will involve:
  - giving pupils regular, planned opportunities to use ICT in lessons, to extend their learning in other subjects and to reinforce and apply their ICT knowledge and skills;
  - ensuring that all pupils build on their skills systematically, through implementing the newly-introduced curriculum planning.
- (3) use assessment information to inform teaching and learning, and to help teachers raise standards [36-38, 70]. This will involve:
  - in marking, providing more feedback on what pupils have done well and guidance how to improve in future;
  - keeping systematic records of how well pupils have done, from marking and other observations;
  - using the records to track pupils' achievement, to set targets for their future attainment, and to monitor standards;
  - using assessment information to evaluate how well the curriculum meets the range of pupils' needs, and adapting curriculum and lesson planning accordingly.

Other areas that the governing body may wish to include in the action plan are:

- giving the deputy headteacher a wider, strategic role in monitoring the school's effectiveness and managing change [48];
- making more use of homework, particularly to promote reading regularly [19];
- developing the governing body's role as a 'critical friend' and in determining the school's educational direction [49];
- using the information gained from monitoring to help staff improve the quality of education they provide [46, 47];
- broadening the educational opportunities available to pupils by providing some extra-curricular activities [24].

*[The numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in which these issues are discussed.]*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	37	100	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	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	119
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	34	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	20
	Girls	26	29	29
	Total	43	47	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	82 (94)	86 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (86)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	17	19
	Girls	31	27	28
	Total	50	44	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (100)	82 (90)	82 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (83)	82 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	103
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	311,632
Total expenditure	307,013
Expenditure per pupil	1,994
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,706
Balance carried forward to next year	46,325

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
Number of questionnaires returned	54

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	44	6	4	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	59	4	4	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	43	22	4	11
The teaching is good.	37	44	0	4	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	43	19	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	28	9	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	44	0	2	11
The school works closely with parents.	26	41	22	9	2
The school is well led and managed.	24	49	11	9	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	51	7	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	24	22	26	22

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

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

54. The children start school in either September or January, depending on when their birthdays are, and attend full-time. Initial assessments show that the overall standard the children have attained when they enter the school is above that expected for children of their age. They are achieving well. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, the majority of children will attain the early learning goals, and many will exceed them.

55. The school's provision for the children in the reception year has greatly improved since the last inspection, when teaching of children aged under five was found to be unsatisfactory. The teaching in the foundation stage is now good. It was good in all the lessons observed and very good in three-fifths of them. Two teachers share the teaching on a part-time basis. They work very well together, planning carefully to meet the needs of every child. They have high expectations for the children's learning and behaviour, and a consistent approach to managing classroom activities. Relationships with the children are good. The teachers give good demonstrations of what is required, and clear explanations to ensure that the children understand what they are learning. For example, in a physical development lesson, the teacher's explanations and demonstration enabled the children to hop, skip and jump with skill and control. The classroom environment is stimulating, and enhanced by good examples of the children's own work. The other adults who work with the children in the foundation stage know them very well and give them good support.

56. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It covers all the required areas of learning, and places appropriate emphasis on communication, language and literacy and on mathematics. Good emphasis is placed on teaching the knowledge and skills necessary for the children to make a successful transition to work based on the National Curriculum in Year 1. The teachers provide a suitable balance between adult-initiated activities and those which the children can choose for themselves. The teachers make daily assessments of how well the children are doing through observing them during lessons, and make good use of this information to meet immediate needs and to amend their lesson plans. However, they make too little use of assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in the education provided, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning in future.

57. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Teachers encourage the children to be increasingly responsible for their own learning. The children are keen, enthusiastic and enjoy school. They respond well to the stimulating classroom environment, and are able to choose appropriate activities for themselves. They develop good relationships and care for each other. For instance, they have recently made friendship bracelets after hearing a story about friends. The children talk about their work and listen to each other well. They are self-confident, happy learners who take turns and share fairly.

58. The provision for children's communication, language and literacy development is also good. The children arrive in school with language skills that are above average, and the staff ensure that these skills are developed appropriately. The children sit and listen attentively, making relevant responses to both adults and other children. They speak confidently and clearly. For example, they explained the sequence of a story from pictures. Their early reading skills are developed well through a wide range of activities. Many children are already able to read simple words, captions and labels. Writing skills are also developed appropriately. The children learn to form their letters correctly. Many can write short captions for their drawings and most can write at least the first few letters of their name.

59. The provision for the children's mathematical development is good. During the inspection, good links were made between work in this area of learning and work in literacy. The children had read the story of Goldilocks and the three bears, and in a sorting activity were able to identify the relative sizes of the three bears. Almost all counted confidently to ten, and some could go beyond this. Most could read these numbers, and also write them. They identified basic shapes such as 'circle' and 'square' confidently, and were able to sort objects using various criteria. Many of the children are able to complete simple mathematical problems involving addition and subtraction. In

addition to sessions focused on mathematical activities, role-play is used well to support mathematical learning.

60. The children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. The provision for this is well planned. Many activities are provided to ensure that the children develop early scientific skills, and the outside area is used well. The children have access to a wide range of building materials, and their models are displayed for all to admire. The classroom has two computers, which the children use confidently for simple educational programmes. Their skills with the mouse and the keyboard are good. The children have learned how to draw maps, by listening to the story about the Three Billy Goats Gruff and then marking the route the goats could have taken. Stories and photographs have also been used well to help them develop a sense of history. The children have learned about other religions and customs through stories from other religions.

61. There is suitable provision for the children's physical development. They learn to use a variety of tools safely and with control. All the children are able to hold pencils and brushes correctly and use scissors safely. Although there is no large climbing apparatus in the outside area for the reception children, teachers compensate for this by using the facilities in the school hall. The children are taught to move confidently and with an increasing awareness of space. Teachers give good demonstrations of skills and techniques, and the children are encouraged to evaluate others' work. This further reinforces their good physical skills.

62. The provision for children's creative development is good. They are given many opportunities to experiment with different techniques. The children are confident in printing and in using paint to produce pictures, and they have used a good variety of materials to make collages. Much of the work they produce is displayed on the classroom walls, and is of good quality. The role-play area is big and inviting, encouraging the children to make up their own stories and act out their experiences. The children sing a variety of songs tunefully, and responded to music with enjoyment.

## **ENGLISH**

63. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have consistently been above average in English, though with some variation from year to year. The school's results in 1999 were its highest ever: they were well above average in reading and writing. In 2000, the results fell. Reading results remained above average compared to schools nationally and to similar schools, whereas writing results were average. The proportion of lower-attaining pupils was greater in 2000 than in 1999, and so the school had expected the results to be less high than previously. In general, girls and boys do equally well.

64. The overall standard pupils attain in English is above average at the end of Year 2, and their achievement is satisfactory. They do well in speaking and listening and in reading, but less well in writing. This has been reflected in the test results for several years. For example, in reading the proportion who gained Level 3 (which is above the nationally-expected Level 2) was well above average compared to results nationally in 2000, whereas in writing the proportion was average. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

65. In oral activities, pupils in Years 1 and 2 speak clearly and confidently. The younger pupils know that they should take turns to answer. They showed very good levels of awareness of how to take part in class and small group discussion, and were keen to contribute ideas of their own. Pupils in both years answered teachers' questions with thoughtful, relevant responses that showed they had listened carefully and with good understanding. Most are articulate, and explain themselves clearly as they have wide vocabularies. These strengths help their learning in English and in their other subjects.

66. Most pupils enjoy reading, both in class and independently. Some pupils in Year 2 are already confident and fluent readers. They are ready to move from following the school's scheme books onto a guided programme of wider reading. This will widen their experience, which at present is too narrow. Many pupils in Year 1 are already able to read simple texts accurately. The lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were given good support in the literacy hour lessons observed, and confidently identified letters and short words. Pupils have some



opportunities to read for information in other areas of the curriculum, and generally do so successfully.

67. In writing, most pupils attain the expected standard by the end of Year 2. They have learned to spell simple words and to construct sentences and short accounts accurately, using capital letters and full stops correctly. The work completed by the pupils who finished Year 2 last summer showed that the pupils had not learned to organise their writing into longer pieces. For instance, they had not tried to organise a story into a beginning, a middle and an end. The higher-attaining pupils had not started to use paragraphs. Pupils had more opportunities for independent writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as to record information in science, history and religious education. However, this writing is generally brief. The pupils currently in Year 2 are undertaking a wider variety of writing tasks, and so the indications are that standards are now higher than they were last year. The progress of pupils in both year groups is still being held back because most teachers continue to over-use worksheets to practise writing skills, and do not expect pupils subsequently to apply the skills in their independent writing. For instance, handwriting practice has not led to Year 2 pupils writing neatly enough, though many are capable of joining their letters when reminded to do so. Overall, therefore, pupils are not achieving as well in writing as they should.

68. Pupils are keen to learn. In all the English lessons observed, they worked hard when the tasks matched their needs. They were well behaved, and their good social and oral skills enabled them to learn well in group activities. Sometimes, they became restless because they were expected to sit still and listen for too long in the whole-class session at the start of the lesson.

69. The teaching of English is satisfactory. Strengths in the lessons observed were that relationships were generally good. Teachers created a positive learning atmosphere by giving much praise and encouragement, and by responding with interest to pupils' contributions. They provided good role models in their use of language, for example by reading aloud entertainingly, and involved all in the class by asking questions of different levels of difficulty. They had planned a suitable variety of activities for the lessons, and often made very effective use of other adults to support group activities in the literacy hour. The extra help given to pupils with special educational needs was often good. However, several weaknesses in teaching are holding back pupils' progress, particularly in writing. The pace of the lesson was sometimes too slow, and led to pupils not working hard enough. Written tasks are often based on worksheets, with too much cutting and sticking, limiting pupils' opportunities to write at suitable length. The sample of work provided from the previous school year showed that this has been a significant factor in pupils doing less well in writing than in reading. Teachers give pupils satisfactory opportunities for writing independently in other areas of the curriculum, particularly science and religious education, but they do not teach and reinforce the skills involved such as recording information. Teachers make insufficient use of homework to develop pupils' reading as books are still sent home only at weekends, although teachers now encourage pupils to borrow titles from the new library as well.

70. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Since the last inspection, the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully, and statutory requirements for the subject are met. Teaching is more effective. Curriculum planning is better than before, though it still does not cover developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Assessment is still a weakness despite recent improvements. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make notes from observing how well pupils do in lessons, but they have not used the information systematically to help pupils do better in future. This has contributed to average- and higher-attaining pupils not making enough progress in writing, for instance. Overall, the improvement in English is satisfactory, as is the school's commitment to and potential for raising standards in English in future.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. The results of the national tests in 2000 were similar to the average for all schools nationally, but below average when compared with similar schools. These results were lower than in 1999, when the results in mathematics were above the national average. This fall in results was expected by the school as it had more lower-attaining pupils in 1999 than previously. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls.

72. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that the standard attained by the pupils at the end of Year 2 was average. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils could add and subtract two digit numbers accurately. They could read, write and order numbers to a hundred correctly, and combine coins to make amounts up to fifty pence. Pupils of all abilities successfully completed block graphs and pictograms to represent information, sometimes using the computer, and extracted information from their charts. Although still broadly average, the standard of work of the pupils now in Year 2 is higher than was attained at this time last year by those in Year 2. The pupils have good mental strategies for working out sums. For instance, they have quick and accurate recall of how to add and subtract to make numbers up to ten. They recognise and use simple fractions, and can solve problems using basic multiplication and division. Most pupils can describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes according to sides, corners and angles.

73. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Appropriate emphasis is given to practical activities, puzzles and games, to ensure that younger pupils understand number, pattern and mathematical language before they are given written tasks. Pupils are encouraged to share their strategies for mental calculations, and to correct themselves when they make mistakes. They become more confident in their use of number, and make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the various elements of the mathematics curriculum, including numeracy.

74. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They enjoy mental mathematics, and show their enthusiasm by responding keenly in question-and-answer sessions. They behave well in lessons, listen carefully to explanations and apply themselves to their work. When working independently, most pupils concentrate hard and complete a satisfactory amount of work. When required to work together, they do so in a supportive and co-operative manner.

75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in two of the five lessons observed. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, when less than half of the lessons observed were satisfactory. Mental arithmetic is taught well and receives appropriate attention in most lessons. Teachers have successfully adapted a common format for planning their lessons, which are structured well. The best lessons were lively. The teachers had high expectations of pupils' work and effort, and provided a good balance between whole-class work, practical activities and written tasks. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson on time, pupils performed a series of short tasks, predicting and recording how many times they could complete each task in one minute exactly. They were moved on to the next activity promptly, given good support in their recording by adult helpers, and improved their prediction and counting skills as they developed their understanding of one minute. Other strengths in teaching are the good use of resources, particularly when new concepts are introduced, and the consistent teaching of mathematical terms. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used number cards to order two and three digit numbers, which improved their understanding of tens and hundreds. The teacher involved all pupils in a brisk question-and-answer session, to check their understanding of the concept. Weaknesses in teaching, seen in lessons that were overall satisfactory, were a slow pace of learning, and unchallenging work set for some groups. Also, in many lessons teachers missed opportunities to use computers to develop pupils' mathematical and ICT skills.

76. The subject has been well managed, and its improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The curriculum, teachers' planning, and the quality of teaching have improved. The scheme of work for mathematics, which is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, is good. A much greater emphasis is now placed on teaching specific methods and strategies, and meeting the needs of higher-attaining pupils. Pupils now learn through a more stimulating range of tasks, including regular practical activities. Numeracy skills are taught and practised satisfactorily in other subjects. A good range of resources and equipment is available. Assessment procedures are being improved, and monitoring has been introduced. Target setting has been introduced for groups of pupils in Year 2, to help teachers focus more sharply on pupils' needs. However, insufficient use is being made of assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics, to ensure that the work extends pupils sufficiently, and to inform target setting for individual pupils. Although the results in the national tests fell in 2000, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The standard the Year 2 pupils are now attaining is higher than last year, though still broadly average. An action plan identifies appropriate future developments, and the potential for further improvement in the subject is good.

## SCIENCE

77. Overall, the results of the teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils in summer 2000 were well below the national average, and also well below average when compared with similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was above the national average, and broadly in line with the figure for similar schools. The standard of written work of the pupils who completed Year 2 in summer 2000 was below average overall. It was not possible to check whether the teacher assessments were accurate because records were not available. The results were higher in previous years, and showed a rising trend which was broadly in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that the standards attained by the pupils now in Year 2 is in line with that expected for their age. The difference between these standards and the results last summer is partly because of differences in the proportion of Year 2 pupils with special educational needs, which was higher in the last school year, and partly because of recent improvements in the teaching of science.

78. Pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory. They cover an appropriate balance of work, with increasing opportunities to plan their own investigations. In Year 1, pupils learn to test materials and group them by their different properties, such as hardness, flexibility and transparency. They have learned about the simple forces of 'push' and 'pull', and have listed examples of some pushes and pulls they observed in familiar objects. During Year 2, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding gained in the Year 1 topics. For example, they have compared a wider range of materials on the basis of twelve properties, using tests and recording their findings in a grid. They are learning to use the principles of scientific enquiry in their investigations. Teachers encourage them to predict outcomes based on their previous knowledge, and to set up fair tests in their investigations. In one lesson, the pupils compared the absorbency of four types of paper cloths. They predicted which types would absorb the most and least water, and in small groups decided how they could test this. Pupils then recorded their results and drew some simple conclusions. In both years, pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support during lessons, and make satisfactory progress.

79. Pupils enjoy science. They responded with interest in the lessons observed. They enjoyed opportunities to investigate and discover from first-hand observation, and discussed this work enthusiastically. They worked well co-operatively, sharing resources and ideas, and helping each other to learn. Pupils do not always take sufficient time and care over recording their work. The amount and quality of written work is often lower than it should be, and pupils do not always express their findings clearly and neatly.

80. The teaching of science is satisfactory. Teachers introduce scientific terms during discussions, and expect pupils to use them. They teach the basic principles of scientific enquiry. They ask open-ended questions, and give pupils good opportunities to use their own ideas when organising investigations. These are improvements in teaching, and they have contributed to the higher standards now attained by pupils in Year 2. Teachers set appropriate tasks for pupils of different abilities, but sometimes expect too little in terms of their written work. Teachers do not assess and record pupils' scientific knowledge and skills systematically, and use the information to inform their lesson planning, and to ensure that pupils are suitably challenged.

81. The management of science and its improvement since the last inspection are satisfactory. Science is now taught as a separate subject, rather than in themes linked to the main topic for each term. The science curriculum has been revised to take account of nationally agreed guidelines. It is now a balanced programme, and places appropriate emphasis on scientific enquiry. Teaching has improved, and is enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily. A system for assessing pupils' skills in investigation has recently been introduced, but is not yet fully established. Based on her monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, the co-ordinator has identified raising the standard of pupils' written work as a priority. This is appropriate. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, except that too little use is made of information and communication technology to develop pupils' research skills in science. A newly-developed environmental classroom in the school grounds, which includes a pond and different study areas, provides a superb resource for first-hand observation. Liaison with parents has also improved: a science open

afternoon gave many parents the chance to view displays of work, and to find out about what their children are learning.

*The subject reports that follow are based on the evidence of a scrutiny of pupils' previously-completed work, discussions with staff and pupils, documentation provided by the school and some lesson observations. Where the evidence is sufficient, overall judgements have been made.*

## **ART**

82. Three art lessons were observed, and pupils' artwork on display around the school was scrutinised. The evidence indicated that the standard Year 2 pupils have attained is in line with what is expected for their age, and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In a lesson, Year 2 pupils experimented skilfully with a variety of media. They produced good observational drawings in pencil and charcoal, with attention to detail, proportion and shading. The standard of this work was above average, and pupils' learning was very good because of the effectiveness of the teaching. Key strengths in the teaching were the clear focus on developing specific skills and vocabulary, the very good support given to individuals, and probing questions being asked in the plenary review of what pupils had done, such as, 'How could she have improved this? What techniques could she have used?'

83. In other lessons, pupils in Year 1 produced detailed drawings, using pencil and pastels with good control and dexterity. They showed less control when using paint, and were not able to mix colours successfully. Pupils have worked with a satisfactory range of media. For instance, they have used clay to make attractive Diwali lamps, and combined materials in collages. They have explored Aboriginal art, and in their own patterns and paintings have successfully adopted similar red and orange colours. Some pupils have also looked at the work of other European painters, such as the impressionist Manet. These experiences make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

84. The evidence indicates that teaching is satisfactory. Resources are used well, as when a teacher used a selection of model boats to capture the pupils' interest. Pupils were shown the effects they could create, and some good drawings resulted. At other times, teachers did not teach art techniques pupils needed to learn, and so they did not improve their skills through the activities. Teachers make some adaptations to the work to meet the range of needs within their classes, but they make too little use of assessment information to target particular needs. Pupils' progress in art is nevertheless satisfactory overall, and they enjoy the subject.

85. Art has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has identified the key areas for further development accurately, and has started to monitor the way art is taught and the quality of work produced by pupils. This improvement in subject management is too recent for an impact on standards to have been achieved. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, as is the range of art materials and resources.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Samples of work and photographic evidence indicated that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that the Year 2 pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected for their age. Pupils understand the need to plan their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 have been presented with the task of designing a vehicle which would move. They have set out their ideas in a labelled drawing, listing the materials they would need and the sequence for making it. They selected their own materials, and made well-constructed vehicles which met the requirements of the task. They were able to discuss what they had made and to compare it with their plan, but they have more difficulty with this aspect of the subject than with designing and making.

87. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in making. Pupils have worked with food, textiles and reclaimable materials. For example, pupils in Year 2

have designed and made parrot puppets, selecting different textiles and using sewing and sticking techniques. They have also learned to follow a recipe, and have designed their own sandwiches.

88. The co-ordinator for the subject has a satisfactory understanding of how the teaching of the subject needs to improve, but has only just begun to monitor the quality of pupils' work. Overall, the improvement to the teaching and learning of design and technology is satisfactory. The school now follows a published scheme of work. This provides a secure basis for teaching key skills, but teachers do not use assessment information to help them adapt the work to pupils' varying needs. Teachers have access to a good range of resources.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

89. One geography lesson was observed. This lesson, and the work pupils had previously completed, indicated that the pupils in Year 2 have attained the standard of skills and understanding expected for their age. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, with a strength in their understanding of maps. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 have succeeded in plotting geographical features using very simple co-ordinates on an imaginary map. Pupils in Year 2 have drawn simple maps of their classroom accurately, and have correctly identified such features as mountains and rivers in photographs. Pupils' previously-completed work included evidence of good use of Ditton to study geographical features, and of an effective use of information and communication technology to produce imaginary maps. The sample of work also revealed a weakness in the teaching, that worksheets have been given to all in the class without adaptation to meet the pupils' varying needs. These worksheets are too easy for the higher-attaining pupils, and teachers have not expected pupils to complete them neatly and carefully enough.

90. Teaching was good in the one lesson observed. The teacher used a variety of resources well, adapting the work to meet the pupils' needs. She questioned the pupils effectively to reinforce and assess what they had learned.

91. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has monitored the standard of pupils' written work, which has enabled her to identify areas of weakness accurately and to advise teachers. This has contributed to the satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection. Curriculum planning and resources are satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

92. Two history lessons were observed, and pupils' previously-completed written work was scrutinised. This evidence indicated that the standard Year 2 pupils have attained in history is in line with what is expected for their age, and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to understand chronological order through making their own time-lines. For example, pupils sequenced pictures of people, placing them in order of age and using appropriate words to describe their relative ages. In Year 2, pupils develop their understanding of chronology through work on changes in transport. In a lesson observed during the inspection, they considered what types of evidence we can use to learn about sailing galleons. They used key questions to find information about these ships, learning about some of their main features and what the galleons were used for. Pupils with special educational needs received appropriate support and made satisfactory progress. The teaching of these lessons was satisfactory. A strength in their approach is that teachers are developing the use of enquiry skills in lessons, and try to present different types of evidence to pupils. A weakness, shown in pupils' previously-completed work, is that written tasks are often restricted to completing comments on worksheets, with too few opportunities for imaginative writing and improving skills in literacy.

93. The pupils enjoy history and finding out about the past. The school makes good use of visits to stimulate their interest in local history. Younger pupils visit the Kent Museum of Rural Life, to learn about old crafts and buildings. Year 2 pupils visit Tonbridge Castle, and contrast life in Norman times with living in their own homes today.

94. Overall, the improvement in history since the last inspection is satisfactory, as is the management of the subject. The policy has been revised, and the curriculum has been changed to

meet the new, national guidelines. The co-ordinator has monitored the standards pupils attain in history, and has prepared an appropriate action plan for improving the subject. Resources are adequate. They include a good range of old photographs, including many of Ditton, which are used in studies of the locality. Teachers still make insufficient use of computer software, to help pupils gather information about the past and to develop their ICT skills during history lessons, and pay insufficient attention to developing pupils' literacy skills through history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

95. The standard pupils attained at the end of Year 2 in summer 2000 could not be judged because of lack of evidence within the sample of work provided by the school, and because records of their attainment have not been kept. Other evidence showed that all the areas of the National Curriculum were taught during the last school year, with more emphasis on computer communications than the other aspects of the subject. Some links between ICT and other subjects have been made, including science and geography, but these are occasional rather than planned for regularly.

96. The classroom computers were used infrequently during the inspection, other than during the timetabled ICT sessions. A few pupils were observed using computers, and some printouts were seen displayed in classrooms. This evidence indicated that the standard of knowledge and skills of the pupils in Year 2 is at the expected level for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection, which has been brought about by the introduction of better resources and curriculum planning. The evidence was insufficient to enable an overall judgement to be made of pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2, but it indicated that pupils do less well than they should because they have had too few opportunities to use computers.

97. Pupils were taught about computers on several occasions during the inspection. These were introductory lessons that involved teachers explaining and demonstrating, which they did clearly. The sessions were too brief to enable an overall judgement on the teaching of ICT to be made. The most effective teaching and use of ICT were seen in a Year 2 class. The pupils were shown how to use a computer graphics program, and in a subsequent session were introduced to the idea of using this program to make front covers for their Diwali cards. This well-organised task linked well to pupils' previous work in religious education and in art. Pupils were attentive and keen to have a go, although those who did have a turn needed help to click on icons and move the mouse. In other lessons, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 occasionally seen working on individual tasks were competent in using the mouse and keyboard, when practising spellings or writing a sentence.

98. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily, and much has been achieved since the last inspection. Parents' fund raising has helped the school to upgrade its computers, and training has developed teachers' knowledge and skills. Timetabled sessions on ICT are now provided each week for all classes. These factors, and the newly-adopted curriculum planning, have enabled all the areas of the National Curriculum for ICT to be covered. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. However, significant weaknesses remain. Pupils still do not use computers often enough, which holds back their learning in ICT. The use of computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects is not planned for. As a result, some teachers are still missing opportunities to extend pupils' skills in ICT. Teachers do not assess and record what pupils have learned, and use this information to ensure that they make steady progress in future.

## **MUSIC**

99. Two music lessons were observed during the inspection. In one of these, Year 2 pupils showed skills that were in line with what is expected of pupils at their age. Most of them used the percussion instruments competently, and correctly tapped out a simple rhythm to a song. They took part with enthusiasm, and handled the instruments sensibly. The teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, although a weakness was that pupils were given insufficient time to practise more complex rhythms and so they did not learn as much as they could have done. In the other lesson, the teacher had a clear focus for Year 1 pupils' learning: to keep a steady beat, using a percussion accompaniment to a simple song. The pupils sang reasonably tunefully. The teacher

encouraged them to improve their performance, which they duly did. They practised their musical skills with obvious enjoyment, joining in enthusiastically in the final performance of the song. Their learning was good because of the challenge provided by the teacher, the very clear explanations and demonstrations of what they were to do, and good management of the activities.

100. These two lessons provided insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement of pupils' achievement in music. Teachers' planning showed that pupils are given a satisfactory range of musical experiences, based on a well-structured scheme that systematically develops musical skills. The co-ordinator has provided recorded music to support the scheme, ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to listen to and enjoy different styles of music. Additional opportunities for musical education are provided in assembly. For instance, pupils listened attentively to a piece of classical music. Visiting performers, such as from a music school, occasionally provide other musical experience. The subject is managed satisfactorily.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

101. The evidence of the lessons observed during the inspection indicated that Year 2 pupils have attained above-average standards for their ages and that their achievement is good. The physical education curriculum has a good balance between dance, games and gymnastics, and examples of all three activities were seen during the inspection. In Year 1, pupils learn to use small and large apparatus safely in gymnastics lessons. During the inspection, they created and performed a series of movements, pushing and pulling their bodies along, and practised landing safely on mats. In games, they learned basic throwing and catching skills using bean bags and large balls. They quickly gained confidence, and improved their handling skills. They were encouraged to learn more difficult techniques, such as passing and catching the ball on the move, and clapping their hands before making a catch. In a dance lesson, Year 2 pupils learned to move imaginatively to music whilst changing their pace, rhythm, level and direction. They kept good time to the music, picked up new movements quickly, and showed good rhythm and co-ordination for their age.

102. The teaching was generally good in the lessons observed. The teachers structured the lessons effectively. They provided warm-up activities at the start, paid appropriate attention to teaching skills and techniques during the main activities, and ended calmly with cool-down sessions. They used praise well to reward and encourage good quality work, and made effective use of demonstrations to teach specific skills. Pupils were encouraged to appraise each others' performances in dance, and to make helpful comments about the movements they observed and why they liked them. Pupils showed enthusiasm and worked hard, both individually and in pairs. They followed instructions promptly and safely, and used equipment and apparatus sensibly.

103. The range of resources for games and gymnastics is satisfactory. The school makes good use of its large hall and outside play areas during lessons. An annual sports afternoon takes place on the school field each year, but no clubs or fitness activities are organised outside lesson times. The subject is managed satisfactorily, its improvement is also satisfactory, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

104. Two religious education lessons were observed during the inspection, and pupils' previously-completed work was scrutinised. The evidence indicated that pupils attained the standard expected by the local Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2, and that the pupils now in Year 2 are attaining the standard expected for their age. Their achievement is satisfactory.

105. In Year 1, the pupils are learning about famous people such as St George and St Francis of Assisi. They learn about some of the stories that Jesus told, and some from the Old Testament. The pupils showed that they understand about miracles, including the raising of Jairus's daughter, and they related these to the need to say 'Thank you'. Many of the pupils have written prayers giving thanks to God. This work contributes well to their spiritual development.

106. In Year 2, the work develops pupils' knowledge and understanding appropriately. They visit the local church and learn more stories about Jesus. They have also learned about Judaism, such as

the Jewish traditions surrounding Shabbat. In their work on Hinduism, pupils have explored the relevance of the Rama and Sita story in the preparations for Diwali.

107. The teaching of religious education was satisfactory in the three lessons observed during the inspection. The teachers showed sufficient subject knowledge, and had planned the work well. They encouraged pupils to reflect on religious traditions. They gave good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, such as when the diya lamps that pupils had made were lit in class. Other evidence showed that an interesting variety of learning activities is provided. For example, pupils have experimented with Hebrew writing when exploring Jewish traditions, and they made Rangoli patterns when learning about Diwali. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly, with encouraging comments. The pupils were well behaved and enjoyed the religious education lessons observed. They enjoyed talking about the practical activities. Their prayers for harvest were particularly thoughtful, and demonstrated a mature approach to their own and other cultures.

108. The curriculum meets the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are given good opportunities for writing in religious education, but teachers have not planned for this work to contribute to the pupils' development of their literacy skills. The management of the subject and its improvement since the last inspection are satisfactory.