

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WENTWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

DARTFORD

KENT

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 131599

Head Teacher: MR D EDWARDS

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Sinclair  
Rgl's OIN: 19824

Dates of inspection: *26 February 01- 1 March 01*

Inspection number: 230709

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wentworth Primary School Wentworth Drive Dartford Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Turner
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19824	Mrs J Sinclair	Registered inspector	Design and Technology	School's results and pupil achievements, characteristics, How well pupils are taught
13395	Mrs J Illingworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents
1224	Mr G Todd	Team inspector	Mathematics, history	How well the school is led and managed.
14997	Mrs V Emery	Team inspector	Art & design, the foundation stage, special educational needs.	
27243	Mr I Tatchell	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology.	
7465	Mr R Brent	Team inspector	Geography, physical education and religious education.	
15023	Mr A Haouas	Team inspector	English, music, English as an additional language, equal opportunities.	Curricular and other opportunities.

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<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL</b>	

This primary school is a recent amalgamation of an infant and junior school (1999). It caters for boys and girls of 4 to 11 years of age. There are 504 full-time pupils in the school and the school is much larger than the national average primary school. The school is on the borders of two education authorities and draws its pupils, in almost equal proportions, from Bexley and Dartford. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds; both more and less privileged. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are average. Pupil mobility is low and few pupils join the school at other than the usual time for admission. Twenty-four pupils come from homes where English is spoken as an additional language and this is slightly higher than in most schools. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is nine per cent, which is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (30 per cent) is above the national average. There are seven pupils with a statement of special educational need and this is in line with the national figure.

## **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school, which is very well led and managed. The head teacher and senior management team have worked extremely hard to ensure a seamless amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools (January 1999). A Local Education Authority report carried out on the infant department soon after amalgamation identified weaknesses in teaching and provision, some of which were serious. The school has concentrated much of its effort over the last two years in order to improve provision and raise standards for the under fives and Key Stage 1 pupils. In this it has been successful; standards in the foundation stage and Year 1 are rising. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and extra curricular provision is excellent. Relationships are very good and this has a very positive effect on the school's strong team spirit. Teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment, they are taught well in the foundation stage and in Key Stage 2 and make good progress, expenditure per pupil is average and therefore the school provides good value for money.

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

- There is very good leadership and management by the head teacher, senior management team and key staff, which is ensuring a clear emphasis on the school's priorities.
- The school achieves good standards in information technology.
- There are very good procedures for assessment in mathematics, science and aspects of English, which are helping to raise standards in these subjects
- There is good teaching overall at Key Stage 2, in English and science at Key Stage 1 and consistently good teaching in the foundation stage and this is having a positive effect on standards and the rate of pupil progress.
- Relationships are very good and this promotes confidence and self esteem in the pupils.
- There is excellent provision for extra curricular activities and this enriches the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The unsatisfactory teaching in one class in Key Stage 1
- Procedures for assessment in the foundation subjects need to be formalised.
- Procedures for on-going monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress in reading.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a newly amalgamated school.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	N/A	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A	B	C	C
Mathematics	N/A	C	C	C
Science	N/A	B	B	B

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

This table shows that the school's results are in line with the national average and that of similar schools in English and mathematics and above average in science. What is not obvious from this is how hard the school has worked to improve standards in writing, which has met with some success as a greater proportion of pupils achieved level 5 in writing this year. It also does not show the value added achieved by the school when one takes into account the larger than average number of pupils in the school with special educational needs. Currently, children enter the school with average levels of attainment; they make good progress in all aspects of learning in the foundation stage, satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress due to the well-planned support they receive. During the inspection standards in Year 1 were at the expected level. However, pupils aged seven were found to be attaining below expectations in English and mathematics and this is linked to the poor provision of the former infant school. In all other subjects pupils aged seven are attaining at the expected level for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain at the expected level in all subjects except information and communication technology where they attain above the expected level. The school has set realistic targets for literacy and numeracy, which it is likely to achieve.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are interested in their work and concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and orderly both in classrooms and as they move around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good across the school and this has a positive impact on pupil learning.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good.

Very good relationships between staff and pupils have a very positive impact on the school as a community and on pupils' self esteem and confidence.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. One per cent of the teaching seen was excellent, eleven per cent very good, forty seven per cent good, thirty eight per cent satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. All of the unsatisfactory teaching seen was in one class at Key Stage 1.

The quality of teaching in English is good at both key stages and pupils make good gains in their learning. Teaching is satisfactory in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good in the foundation stage, satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. There is good teaching of information and communication technology at Key Stage 2. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are taught well in all classrooms and pupil learning is good. Good pupil management is a strong feature of most lessons and questioning is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and extend their thinking. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are supported well through good teaching and effective deployment of support staff. The unsatisfactory teaching which occurs in one class in Key Stage 1 is linked to poor teacher subject knowledge, ineffective questioning of pupils and unsatisfactory classroom management skills. This adversely affects pupils learning as they lose interest and engage in chatter.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and a good range of learning opportunities, which are enhanced through excellent extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. Individual education plans are of good quality and are used well. Early identification is in place and support is used well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Eligible pupils are effectively supported by classroom teachers and support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good personal development is supported by strong links with the local community. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is very good, whilst provision for cultural development is good. However, the school does not celebrate its own cultural diversity well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good provision for pupils' welfare within a secure and caring community. Assessment is used well to promote learning in mathematics, science and aspects of English, but is less well developed in other subjects

Extra curricular provision is excellent; a wide range of activities is provided which enhance the curricular provision. Partnership with parents is good. Parents are keen to support their children and do this very well through regular homework, but particularly reading.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership of the head teacher is very good. He empowers his staff and cares passionately about his pupils. He is very ably supported by his senior management team and core co-ordinators who successfully lead their subjects in order to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and fulfil their responsibilities well. However, they have missed opportunities for training and are not proactive in the on – going work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor progress against priorities in the school development plan. Good use is made of monitoring in order to raise standards across the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school has good resources, which it uses effectively to promote learning. Financial decisions are based on very good planning and financial control is very good.

Overall there is a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources are good across most subjects. The internal accommodation is spacious and a programme of redecoration is ensuring that it is well maintained. There are some bright murals on the wall and these enhance the environment. Playground structures such as the large train for the foundation stage curriculum and the adventure playground have significantly enhanced the outdoor accommodation in Key Stage 1. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively when purchasing goods.

## 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 and behave well.</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of extra curricular activities.</li> <li>• The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and there is good special educational needs support.</li> <li>• The amount of homework their children get.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• More information on the rationale for mixed age classes.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive view expressed by parents but found that the school was very well led and managed rather than well lead and managed and that the school provided an excellent range of extra curricular activities. With regard to what parents would like to see improved the team found that overall information on progress was satisfactory and the mixed age classes did not present a problem.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has made good improvements in the provision for pupils in the foundation stage and at Key Stage 1, since the amalgamation in 1999. This is having a positive impact on standards in the foundation stage and the effects of this are showing in the standards attained by current Year 1 pupils. However, the impact on standards further up the school has yet to be affected by these improvements. The school also has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs which impacts on standards and sometimes on particular year groups. For example, thirty six per cent of its current Y6 pupils have special educational needs.
2. The results of assessments undertaken when children start school show that currently attainment on entry is average. Pupils achieve well in the foundation stage due to consistently good and sometimes very good teaching, the good environment created and the high quality curricular provision. Most children are likely to attain the early learning goals across the areas of learning, with a good number attaining beyond this. Provision for children's personal and social education is good. Children are motivated and excited by learning. They are confident to try new activities and initiate ideas. They form good relationships with adults and each other. Children enjoy listening to stories and talking about big books such as 'Pirate Pete'. Most handle books carefully and understand that text has meaning. They use the pictures well to help them tell the story. They have a good knowledge of letters and sounds and use this to help them read and write simple sentences. Children count to ten and beyond, identify missing numbers and recognise numbers that come before or after a specific number.
3. The Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results for 2000 are below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing when compared with similar schools. As a result of poor provision for Key Stage 1 pupils before the amalgamation, there is a residue of underachievement and this is reflected in these results. However, the school has worked extremely hard to increase the number of pupils attaining the higher level 2B and has been successful. As a result of the low proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level 3 in the Key Stage 1 writing tests the school has now put Year 2 pupils in ability sets for extended writing in order to improve attainment.
4. At Key Stage 1 pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment in all subjects of the curriculum. At Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and satisfactorily in all other subjects.
5. The Key Stage 2 test results for 2000 are average in English and mathematics and above average in science in comparison with both the national average and that of similar schools. This is good achievement when considering the below average attainment of pupils aged seven. Inspection findings based on lessons seen, pupils' work and displays, indicate that for the current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 standards remain broadly similar to those of the year 2000 pupils.
6. Standards in speaking and listening for pupils currently in Year 2 are below expectations but are at the expected levels at the end of Year 6. By age seven, in spite of planned opportunities for talk within the curriculum many pupils do not actively participate in discussion and this inhibits the progress they make. By age eleven, pupils explore texts in an open-ended way, participate in discussion and engage in exploratory talk to negotiate meaning. At age 7, higher and average attaining pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about story line and their favourite characters. They are familiar with the use of the contents page and index as an aid to accessing information. Some lower attaining pupils have limited ability to read simple texts and read hesitantly. By age eleven, the majority of pupils use a good range of strategies to aid their reading. They discuss a variety of texts confidently and can predict what will happen using their knowledge of the plot and

characters. Standards in writing are below expectations at age seven and at the expected level at eleven. By age seven, higher attaining pupils develop their ideas sequentially and use capital letters and full stops fairly consistently. They develop a sense of audience through writing for a variety of purposes, such as diary or letter writing. Average or lower attaining pupils generally do not write in sentences. They do not sustain ideas or develop them sufficiently. By eleven the majority of pupils write extensively. Writing is imaginative and shows a good grasp of paragraphing and structure.

7. In mathematics, standards for the current Year 2 pupils are below expectations. They are at the expected level by age eleven. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of place value and some higher attaining pupils use hundreds tens and units confidently. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematical language is limited. By eleven, higher attaining pupils work accurately, make sensible estimates and understand terms such as 'obtuse', 'acute' 'right' when referring to angles. Most know that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees.
8. Standards in science are at the expected level at age seven and eleven, although a good proportion of pupils attain at the higher level at eleven. By the end of Year 2, pupils can identify the best conditions for growing plants and, with support, set up a fair test to check their predictions. By the end of Year 6 pupils carry out a series of tests to reduce the air resistance affecting paper propellers. Enquiry skills are well developed and pupils have a good investigative approach to their work.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are at the expected level at seven and above expectations at eleven. The school has worked very hard to improve pupils' competence in this subject. By the end of Year 2 pupils effectively use a variety of software, which includes word-processing, graphics and databases. They use floor robots to sequence a set of instructions to make them move in a prescribed manner. At age 11, pupils use desktop publishing programs competently and use the Internet to locate and interrogate information.
10. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 write extensively on the Victorians in history. Many pupils use their mathematical skills effectively when using maps and charts in geography.
11. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are at the expected level at both key stages.
12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because pupils have good attitudes to their learning and their targets are used well to plan their work. The three pupils at the early stage of acquisition of English as an additional language achieve appropriately and make good progress against their prior attainment.
13. As a result of monitoring of pupils' performance, the school has taken appropriate action to address the relative underachievement of boys and has been successful.

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

14. Pupils like coming to school and are eager to learn. Their behaviour and personal development is good. The inspection team agrees with parents, the majority of whom think children behave well. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated, listen attentively in lessons, and sustain their concentration well. They enjoy taking part in class discussions, and are keen to answer questions and put forward their views. Pupils also like investigative work and during the inspection were observed working with enthusiasm on a science investigation. In a minority of lessons pupils are chatty and slow to settle down. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to work collaboratively.
15. Pupils' behaviour is good. In general, they respect the code of conduct, follow classroom rules and obey instructions from members of staff. Standards of behaviour in lessons are highest where teaching is stimulating and has good pace, and teachers have high expectations regarding

conduct. In the few unsatisfactory lessons seen pupils were restless and distracted one another in a way that impaired learning and progress. Standards of behaviour outside the classroom are good. Pupils are orderly and well mannered at lunchtime and when moving around the site. They show respect for property, keeping the school site tidy, and handle resources responsibly in lessons. Pupils are confident and polite. They are friendly to all adults and to each other. No examples of aggression or bullying were observed during the inspection. The absence of such behaviour is apparent from the fact that no pupils have been excluded from school in the recent past. Pupils mix well across lines of gender and race. Pupils with English as an additional language are motivated and keen to learn.

16. The quality of relationships is very good, and is one of the school's strengths. Pupils trust and respect members of staff, and get on well with each other. Pupil/pupil relations are friendly, constructive and co-operative. Pupils work well together on group tasks in lessons, sharing problems and helping one another to solve them. In general they understand and show concern for other people's feelings. They respond positively to teachers who insist on good manners and discipline in the classroom, and in their lessons behave politely and considerately.
17. The quality of personal development is good overall, with pupils becoming more independent and mature as they get older. They respond well to the good range of opportunities that they get to exercise responsibility outside the classroom. For example, pupils set up the hall for assemblies and willingly clear up in the dining hall at lunchtime. House captains and vice captains help to supervise the corridors during breaks, and are responsible for monitoring the totals of house points. Pupils carry out their duties responsibly. When given the opportunity they show initiative and independence with regard to their own learning. For example, older pupils carry out research on their topics at home.
18. Attendance and punctuality are good. The school's attendance rate in the current academic year is 94.7 per cent, which is above the national average for primary schools. The incidence of unauthorised absence is below average. Time keeping is good, with only a few pupils being late for morning school.
19. Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and attendance promote learning and progress, and therefore raise levels of attainment. Interest in work and standards of behaviour in lessons vary according to the quality of teaching rather than the age of the pupils. There are no significant differences between the key stages.

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

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the teaching seen one per cent was excellent, eleven per cent very good, forty seven per cent good, thirty eight per cent satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. The teaching is consistently good or better in the foundation stage. It varies between very good and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, but is satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 2. All of the unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one Key Stage 1 class. The school is aware of this weakness in teaching and monitoring and support is on-going.
21. The teachers in the foundation stage have a clear understanding of how young children learn and high expectations of what they can achieve. Planning is detailed and there are good opportunities for children to investigate and initiate their own activities. As a result of the good teaching children become confident, competent learners.
22. Teaching is good in English at both key stages. In mathematics, it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good across the school. Planning for literacy and numeracy is often very detailed, particularly at Key Stage 2, and clearly identifies activities for pupils of differing prior attainment. Work for pupils is clearly based on guidance from the national strategies and ensures pupils' skills are developed in a progressive manner. Pupils in Year 2 are grouped according to ability for extended writing, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are similarly grouped for mathematics and this helps teachers to focus teaching specifically

to meet their needs. At Key Stage 2, teachers make very good use of resources, for example, to help improve pupils' understanding of angles. Skilful questioning of pupils helps them to gain a greater understanding of poems beyond their literal meaning. Most teachers manage lessons well and as a result children are keen to work and sustain concentration. Although teachers make good use of technical vocabulary some pupils still have difficulty finding alternate words, for example, for 'add' and 'take away'. Sometimes, slow pace and fairly lacklustre mental maths sessions detract from the quality of teaching in mathematics lessons and slows the rate of pupil progress.

23. Teachers across the school make satisfactory and sometimes good use of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects, particularly geography, religious education, history and design and technology.
24. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and this impacts significantly on the good progress they make. Pupils' needs are well known to teachers and support assistants, who use pupils' specific targets well to plan their work. Members of the support staff are well briefed before lessons, have written instructions and make detailed assessment notes about individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is mainly within the classroom, but on a few occasions pupils are withdrawn for specific teaching or detailed assessment. These sessions are of good quality and good learning results through good targeted support and good identification of specific needs.
25. The teaching of science is good at both key stages. Teaching is satisfactory overall in all other subjects except ICT at Key Stage 2, where it is good.
26. There are good and sometimes very good features in many lessons which contribute effectively to pupils' learning. All lessons are well planned and this gives a good direction to the work and a clear purpose for pupils' learning. This is clearly reflected in lessons where pupils are fully engaged in their work and as a result acquire new learning. Good features of most science lessons are the opportunities provided for pupils to work collaboratively on scientific investigations and the effective questioning, which encourages pupil to think scientifically. For example, "Why did you think that would happen? How could you find out?" Almost all teachers have good relationships with their pupils and pupils respond well, with good behaviour and a responsible attitude to their work. This promotes confident pupils, which in turn helps with their learning. In the good lessons teachers are well prepared, lessons have a brisk pace and are purposeful and challenging. In these lessons pupils work hard and put in a good amount of intellectual effort. Skilful questioning by teachers, particularly in Key stage 2, helps to consolidate learning and promote new learning and this is linked to teachers' good subject knowledge. Teachers make good use of assessment information both to inform planning and to modify future plans. The school has a clear marking policy in place and teachers use marking well to praise pupils' achievements and indicate areas for improvement.
27. Where teaching is unsatisfactory in one class in Key Stage 1, the teacher has weak knowledge and understanding of the teaching skills required for the subject, the content of the activities does not engage the pupils and lessons often lose direction. In these lessons pupils lose interest and sit and chat to each other. As a result, learning is limited.

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

28. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils in the school. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Time allocation provides a good balance for the core and foundation subjects and planning across phase and year teams enables the school to keep the curriculum under review.
29. The school has implemented the literacy strategy well and this is supporting the good progress made by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils are set in ability groups for mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and once a week for extended writing in Year 2. Target setting, which has been

introduced in both subjects since September, is proving to be an effective measure and targets are being well used by pupils as a focus for improving key skills.

30. The provision the school makes for extra curricular activities is excellent and significantly enriches the curriculum. In sport, there are clubs for football, netball, table tennis and athletics. Others include country dancing, computers, recorders, chess, a choir and a school band. All the activities are open to boys and girls and are well attended. Most of the clubs are run by teachers in the school, which is a good reflection of their commitment to the pupils.
31. The majority of pupils have good access to the full curriculum, including activities organised outside the school day. Boys and girls participate on an equal footing in mixed groups in most of the extra curricular activities on offer. The provision the school makes for the few pupils with English as an additional language is good and enables them to make good progress. The use of annual assessments, including optional tests in Key Stage 2, is enabling the school to focus on pupils who are underachieving. The school's recent analysis has, for instance, revealed some underachievement of boys in writing in comparison with girls. Action is being taken to address this through increased opportunities for drama and books which appeal to boys and through action research carried out by one of the deputy head teachers as part of her MA.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this helps them to make good progress. Teachers assess their needs well and produce good quality education plans that show what pupils should learn next. These plans are used well in lessons and teachers and learning support assistants know what to focus on when helping pupils with special educational needs. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are met and teachers receive effective advice, when required, from an appropriate range of external specialists. Pupils with statements of special educational need have yearly reviews and their requirements are generally met. The exception is external speech therapy support, which is not currently available; the school meets this need as best it can through a package of support for teachers to follow.
33. Provision for personal, social, and health education (PSHE) including drug misuse and sex education is satisfactory. Some opportunities for circle time are well used to explore issues of concern to pupils such as the use of the playground and how playtime can be improved to become a happy time for all pupils. The school has identified PSHE as an area in need of development as it is not yet fully in place across the school. Provision for a scheme of work in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000 has been identified in the school development plan. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as the police to promote pupils' awareness of safety and issues related to alcohol and drug abuse. The school nurse makes a positive contribution to sex education and works closely with pupils and staff.
34. The school maintains a good range of links with the community to enrich the curriculum. Pupils participate in a number of national and county sporting competitions in athletics, netball and football in conjunction with other schools. Close links are also maintained with a school in Chicago, through letter correspondence and electronic mail, and with another in France, which involves an exchange of pupils, and project work in geography and English. A wide range of visitors contributes to activities. For example, local librarians, illustrators, authors and storytellers work closely with pupils through a range of workshops.
35. The school maintains constructive relationships with other schools within its cluster of primary schools. There are partnerships with the University of Greenwich, to provide initial teacher training and Dartford grammar school, who provide French lesson for Year 5 and 6. Effective links with secondary schools in core subjects help with the transition of pupils to secondary education.
36. Opportunities for pupils to cultivate their personal development are good. Pupils are encouraged to care for each other and respect the beliefs and values of others.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spiritual development occur during assemblies and religious education lessons. Local church people, from whom pupils

learn about the life of Jesus, regularly support them. The pupils sing hymns and choruses with enthusiasm, giving a spiritual feeling to these events. However, there are few planned opportunities for stillness and reflective silence in collective worship and religious education or in response to other stimuli such as music, art and literature and this limits opportunities for spiritual development.

38. Opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. The school recognises and rewards kind and caring behaviour. Good behaviour is rewarded by effective use of praise and by encouragement, and pupils learn to recognise the outcomes of their behaviour. Opportunities are taken to develop moral themes in lessons. For example, during one successful literacy lesson Year 6 pupils were asked to look at a poem about parenting and to discuss the moral responsibilities of parents. Strategies such as this are successful in helping pupils come to terms with difficult issues. Pupils are taught right from wrong and are supported by school and classroom rules. Staff provide good role models and give pupils opportunities to consider moral issues as they arise in class and around the school. At lunchtime pupils take turns as monitors, to look after younger pupils. Some Year 6 pupils are house captains who are responsible for collecting house points from each class. Pupils raise money for others through activities such as 'Red Nose day' and concerts for local senior citizens. Recently relationships with others have been extended by the use of the school's new Internet connection, allowing e-mails to be received from friends at home and abroad.
39. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and is supported by very good relationships between adults and pupils. Empathy with the needs of others is fostered and shown in lessons and all aspects of school life. Pupils are helpful and supportive of each other. For example, they share materials, help each other and work together. This aspect of the school's life is supported by visits to places in the community such as the swimming pool and, for older pupils, a planned visit to France. After school activities play a strong part in helping develop pupils' social skills by giving them opportunities to discover what makes a good team member or good citizen.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. They learn about their own culture through the curriculum in subjects such as art, music, literature and history. The school takes part in local activities, competing with other schools in games and receiving a visit from the local mayor, who opened the new information and communication technology suite and early years play area and presented the school with a millennium shield. Visiting authors during book week make a contribution, which heighten pupils' appreciation. Pupils develop an appreciation of other cultures through their topic work about water and its importance for developing countries. Music is appropriately used in assemblies and pupils are becoming familiar with composers and their music. Work of artists such as Monet is displayed around the school, with attractive displays celebrating the art of others cultures, including Islamic art patterns, ancient Greek pottery and studies of ancient Egypt. However, opportunities for pupils to understand the multicultural nature of society are limited and links within the school's own cultural family should be strengthened to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

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

41. The school has effective pastoral policies and takes good care of its pupils. It provides them with a secure environment in which they can learn and make good progress. Parents are happy with the support and guidance that their children receive.
42. Arrangements for promoting pupils' general welfare are good. The quality of care is enhanced by constructive relationships. Pupils trust adults in the school, are open with them, and feel able to go to them when they require help. For their part, members of staff know children well as individuals and are therefore in a position to provide them with good guidance. Teachers are caring and supportive and, where necessary, will make time to see pupils on a one-to-one basis.
43. The school has thorough procedures for protecting the health and well being of pupils, staff and visitors. It has a clear formal policy for health and safety, backed by effective practical provision for risk assessment and checks of the premises and equipment. First aid cover is good. There are well thought out arrangements for dealing with incidents in any part of the school. For example, every



lunchtime supervisor carries a portable first aid pack while on duty. Arrangements for child protection are good, and comply with both local guidelines and legal requirements.

44. The school has effective procedures for encouraging pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. The school has a computer-based system for recording attendance and uses this to good effect to analyse and monitor pupils' performance. Instances of unexplained, frequent or prolonged absence are properly followed up. Members of staff make every effort to get children with poor attendance records, such as those who are "school phobic", back into school.
45. The school sets high standards regarding pupils' behaviour and has put in place appropriate measures to attain them. Its ethos and expectations are clearly set out in the school prospectus. They are also summarised in the home/school agreement, to which pupils as well as parents are signatories. There is a whole school policy on behaviour that gives members of staff clear guidelines on behaviour management. The school's approach to discipline strikes a balance between rules and deterrents on the one hand and rewards and incentives on the other. There is a system of house points and inter-house competition, which exploits pupils' sense of group loyalty in order to promote good work and behaviour. The school gives due recognition to individual success. Teachers use praise well in lessons and notable achievements are celebrated in school assemblies. There is also a special award for good behaviour, namely the "Wentworth Courtesy Shield", which is presented for politeness and good manners.
46. Strategies for dealing with aggressive behaviour are effective. The school has a formal anti-bullying policy and supports it with good practical measures. Pupils are properly supervised during breaks, and the playground is well provided with equipment to keep them interested and occupied. These arrangements reduce the likelihood of boisterous and aggressive behaviour. Lunchtime routines are very well organised and help to create a civilised atmosphere in the dining hall. This in turn encourages pupils to be polite, self-disciplined and orderly.
47. The school makes good arrangements for monitoring and promoting children's personal development. The curriculum makes provision for pupils' personal development in the form of a programme of personal, social and health education, and there are well-established formal procedures for recording and tracking progress in the Foundation Stage. There are also good systems for monitoring the development of pupils with special educational needs. Across the school, formal measures are effectively complemented by ad hoc methods. Thanks to their good knowledge of pupils as individuals, members of staff are able to monitor their personal development on an informal basis and to take appropriate action to help children who are having problems.
48. Good assessment is made of pupils with special educational needs. This is used effectively to prepare good quality individual education plans and the progress each pupil makes against these is monitored well. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed. These reviews are of good quality and help pupils, teachers and parents to know what needs to be done next. The targets set for individual plans are well designed for personal development and literacy support and there is some numeracy support. The identification of the levels, upon which pupils are identified on the Code of Practice, is accurate and reviewed and moderated regularly. Pupils with English as an additional language are well catered for within the classroom as the teachers are well aware of their needs and how to meet them.
49. The school uses its analysis of assessment data effectively to monitor and identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving.
50. The school's arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good in the core subjects except for reading, where there is a lack of formative records and diagnostic comments. Assessment procedures are also much less developed in the foundation subjects but the school is tackling this as it reviews subjects and policies. However, since the amalgamation of the infant and junior departments when assessment in Key Stage 1 was inadequate, the school has now developed a range of assessment tools in English, mathematics and science in all year groups including the use of optional tests. Records of assessment results are kept, showing pupils'

progress across year groups. These are used to identify individuals and groups who are achieving below, as well as above, what is expected and ensure they are targeted for support. Samples of work, which are annotated and levelled, provide effective guidance for teachers and result in accurate assessment.

51. Targets for pupils are well developed in English and mathematics and pupils are constantly reminded of them, for instance in literacy lessons. The school's analysis of test results is effective and has led to the identification of areas for improvement, for instance in boys' attainment in writing. Tracking of pupils' progress and evaluations of pupils' attainment are being developed and used to inform target setting. These are now done manually while the school waits for the computerised Local Authority system to be put in place.

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

52. Parents have a positive view of the school and are supportive of it. The majority gave favourable responses to all the questions in the inspection survey. They say that the school is well led and their children are expected to work hard. Parents are also happy with standards of behaviour, the quality of teaching, the progress that their children make and the amount of homework. A large majority feel that it is easy to approach the school over any concerns or queries. On the other hand, twenty two per cent feel that they are not well informed about their child's progress.
53. The inspection evidence supports parents' views on their partnership with the school. Home/school links are strong and enhance pupils' learning. Information on children's progress is satisfactory overall, but a few of the annual written reports to parents have weaknesses in the information they give on progress.
54. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The annual report of the governing body and the school prospectus comply with legal requirements. However the prospectus does not contain any information on the school's use of mixed aged classes, and parents are given no explanation of the reasons for it. In other respects, the prospectus gives parents good information on the running of the school, such as details of the school rules and the school's sporting aims. There are useful sections on procedures for reporting on children's progress and for parent/teacher consultations. Arrangements for keeping parents in touch with events in school are good. Parents regularly receive newsletters and notices, and are advised in advance of the topics, which their children will be studying during the course of the term.
55. Parents receive sound information on pupils' progress. Some is given through informal meetings with members of staff at the end of the school day, and through the "contact books" that pupils take home. These give parents useful insight into their children's reading, but are not complete homework diaries. Nor are they a vehicle for sustaining an on-going dialogue between home and school. Arrangements for formal consultations between parents and teachers are good. There is a good programme of parents' evenings, and the school goes out of its way to provide convenient times for appointments. It also encourages parents to make appointments to see staff on other occasions, should they have concerns about their children's progress.
56. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is good and has a positive effect on standards achieved. The school values parents' support, and understands the importance that this has for children's education. It has therefore taken steps to establish good home/school links and to promote parental involvement in pupils' learning. Wentworth's home/school contract, for example, requires parents to promise to work in partnership with the school and to support homework. They are also encouraged to participate in pupils' learning in the classroom, and the school makes it clear that parents are always welcome as volunteer helpers. The school's efforts are effective and receive a positive response. Most parents are keenly interested in their children's progress and their interest and involvement enhance standards of attainment. Conversations with pupils, and scrutiny of their reading records, show that the majority of parents hear their children read at home. The number of parent helpers is significant, and several were observed helping with swimming classes during the week of the inspection. The parent teacher association is very active and successful and raises large sums of money for the school. Attendance is good at consultation

evenings where teachers and parents discuss pupils' progress. Most families are very supportive if there are any difficulties concerning a child's attitudes, behaviour or attendance. They will co-operate with the school and work closely with members of staff to resolve the problems.

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

57. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, there has been good improvement in the attainment of pupils in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1. This is due to the very strong leadership and commitment of the head teacher and senior management team who have been well supported by the governing body. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well. The school monitors its own performance effectively and thus allows good practice to be shared. The school is well staffed and has good levels of resources to support teaching and good accommodation. The school is effective because of the good overall teaching, supported by a good curriculum and very good leadership. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are enabled to achieve well. When this is balanced against the average cost per pupil the school offers good value for money.
58. All staff with management responsibilities share a clear vision of how the school should improve. Their efforts have been focused on improving the management, curriculum and quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The recently appointed deputy has been very influential in this process and standards are rising, particularly in the reception classes. Staff have adjusted well to the changes and there is good liaison between teachers from both key stages. There is a good sense of teamwork. This has impacted positively on the amalgamation of the two schools. The school's aims are centred upon achievement, developing confidence, self-esteem and relationships. The school also aims to encourage children to behave in socially acceptable ways and is very successful in meeting this aim. The aims also acknowledge the importance of equal opportunity for all pupils and the majority of staff have an appropriate awareness of pupil's backgrounds and needs.
59. Curriculum co-ordinators are empowered to do their jobs; delegation is real and effective. They have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of planning, assessment and marking in their subjects. This ensures a continual review of the curriculum and improves the opportunities given for the pupils' learning. Quality assurance is better in the core subjects but the school improvement plan shows that existing good practice is being extended to the foundation subjects. The senior management team monitor the quality of teaching and have ensured that good systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are in place. The feedback to teachers about their performance is detailed and contributes significantly to the development of the teaching skills of a well motivated staff as was evident from the good teaching seen during the week of the inspection.
60. The very good leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator underpins the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Very good knowledge of the identification of the complex needs of these pupils is used energetically to ensure this good provision is maintained and improved. A very strong commitment to the inclusion of these pupils is at the heart of this work and compliments the aims and values of the school.
61. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The members are committed to the school and show good personal involvement, particularly in areas where they have expertise such as grounds and buildings, finance and personnel. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to shaping the school's educational direction through its committee structure and contribution to the school's strategic planning. However, they have taken up few of the training initiatives offered, visit the school infrequently and as a result their understanding of curriculum matters and their involvement in the day-to-day running of the school is not as effective as it could be. The support of the governors, at the time of the amalgamation, was invaluable to the head teacher and staff.
62. The school has effective strategies for the appraisal and evaluation of the performance of the staff in the school. As a consequence of the monitoring and appraisal, improved teaching is having a

positive impact on the pupils' learning throughout the school. The governors have set realistic performance targets for the head teacher and two deputies.

63. There is very good support for the newly qualified teacher, allowing her the opportunity to settle confidently into her new career. She has a personal mentor and is also well supported by the deputy head. Ample training opportunities are available for her to develop her knowledge and expertise. Other teachers new to the school receive very good support from co-ordinators, the head teacher and senior staff. The school provides opportunities for the University of Greenwich to train new teachers and some students were on a teaching practice during the inspection.
64. Support for special educational needs pupils is through good numbers of support assistants and two special educational needs teachers; overall making good provision. Support assistants are used well in small group situations. Teacher support is mainly within the classroom, where they effectively provide both advice and support to both teachers and pupils.
65. The overall efficiency of the school is very good and there is a shared commitment to raise standards. Financial planning is very good and supports the school's educational priorities. For example, the governors and head teacher have produced a cost-effective staffing structure, which is enhancing the delivery of the National Curriculum. Careful financial management to build up sufficient funds over time is evident in the planned provision of new resources and equipment; in particular, play areas for younger pupils and the development of information and communication technology. Grants are used well to support the school's development, for example the use of special educational needs funding. The school considers the principles of best value for money carefully and succeeds in finding a range of alternative providers, such as in music tuition, to secure optimum efficiency. Day-to-day financial controls are very good and have enabled the head teacher and governors to monitor and evaluate spending decisions in order to raise standards. The most recent audit document confirms the quality of the school's financial systems.
66. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Additional training has been undertaken by most teachers in literacy and numeracy and the effectiveness of this training was observed during the inspection. The support staff are greatly valued by the school.
67. Accommodation in the school is good but the buildings, because of their age and construction, require constant maintenance. The governors have insured a good rolling programme of refurbishment and decoration. Extensive work has been completed; for example, the refurbishment of two classrooms, re-flooring of corridors in Key Stage 1 and a networked computer room. Most classrooms are of a good size and teachers have ensured that the displays are informative and attractive. The school has two large halls a separate canteen and school meals are cooked on the premises. The outside accommodation is very good. There are hard and soft play areas, an imaginatively designed and well equipped play area for pupils in the Foundation Stage and a stimulating adventure playground for pupils in Key Stage 1.
68. Resources for learning are very good in information and communication technology. They are good in mathematics, science, history, geography, art and physical education. Resources for pupils in the foundation stage are also good. There is a small library that is well stocked and a good range of fiction and non-fiction books in classrooms.

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

In order to raise standards and enable pupils to make further progress, the governing body, head teacher and staff as a whole team need to:

### **Improve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 by:**

- Continuing to use and develop the strategies in place to raise standards at Key Stage 1

Paragraphs:3,7,50,72,80,81,82,84,87,92

### **Improve the unsatisfactory teaching in one class in Key Stage 1 by:**

- Increasing teacher's subject knowledge.
- Improving planning to ensure there is sufficient detail to guide lessons.
- Improving classroom management and organisation.

Paragraphs:20,27,86,97

### **Formalise procedures for assessment in the foundation subjects by:**

- Agreeing a whole school approach to assessment of the foundation subjects
- Planning work which more clearly meets pupils' needs.

Paragraphs:50,108,115,1270, 127,133,136,140,143

### **Improve procedures for on-going monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress in reading by:**

- Carrying out a thorough analysis of weaknesses in pupils' performance
- Consistent use of diagnostic assessment as a means of monitoring progress
- Using guided reading sessions to focus on the development of specific skills in a progressive manner

Paragraphs:50,87

### **In addition the school needs to:**

- Ensure parents are clear about the rationale for mixed classes and the appropriateness of curriculum coverage for them.

Paragraph:54

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	11	47	38	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	504
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	143

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	34	40	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	29
	Girls	34	33	34
	Total	60	59	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (80)	80] (83)	85 (89)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	29	28
	Girls	35	33	34
	Total	62	62	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (83)	84 (83)	84 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	36	43	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	31
	Girls	39	36	39
	Total	62	60	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (75)	76 (69)	89 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	27
	Girls	38	37	39
	Total	61	60	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (71)	76 (74)	84 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

*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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	397
Any other minority ethnic group	14

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	29.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	243

**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.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	99/2000
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	£
Total income	857744
Total expenditure	834923
Expenditure per pupil	1684
Balance brought forward from previous year	52811
Balance carried forward to next year	75632



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	504
Number of questionnaires returned	144

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	42	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	63	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	57	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	48	45	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	50	19	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	43	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	52	12	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	50	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	53	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	36	6	1	6

### Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting some concerns were expressed at the provision for pupils within the mixed age classes.

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

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

69. Children in the reception classes enjoy a rich and practical curriculum, which is planned well to meet their needs.
70. At present, there are 70 children in the reception classes who are spread across 3 classes, one of which is a mixed reception/ Year 1 class. Almost all children have had pre-school experience, mainly at playgroups. They enter school, after a satisfactory programme of visits, in the Autumn and Spring terms of the academic year in which they are five years old. At first they are part-time, but by each half term the children are full time. The children's ability on entry is mainly average, although there is a spread of ability with some being above or below this. By the end of the reception year, almost all reach all the requirements of the goals for all the areas of learning. A good number reach beyond this level, indicating good progress overall.
71. The main reason for this good progress is the good teaching and high expectations of the teachers. Particular strengths in the teaching include good support for the development of personal and social skills, in particular the development of independence. Additionally, work is well planned to include a range of practical and interesting tasks, resulting in children who want to come to school and enjoy learning. The basic skills of letter sounds and names and counting are particularly well taught. It is because of this that children quickly become confident in their early attempts to read, write and count. Children with special educational needs and those who have English as a second language also benefit from good teaching and support and are fully involved in activities. For example, the teachers and learning support assistants take care to ensure that instructions are understood in whole class lessons, such as physical education and music, by working closely with these children. It is also a good reflection of the school's aims and values that all staff are learning sign language to support those with language difficulties. The children in the reception class were seen to be learning simple signing in their action songs in order to communicate with a child with special educational needs in their class.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development.**

72. The good teaching for this area of learning results in children who are interested, excited and motivated to learn. The very good provision for child initiated activities offers a very good range of practical tasks. For example, in the activity room, children were role playing in the Post Office, using wet and dry sand together, making music in a group with an adult or working together on the computer. Children develop confidence in trying new activities and initiating ideas. They form good relationships with other children and adults. All adults provide very good role models for children, always treating them with warmth, care, quiet respect and courtesy. This results in good relationships and a good level of trust and helps children to develop good social skills. The good teaching in this area of learning helps to promote confidence and independence very well and by the end of the reception year, all children meet the required goals for this area of learning.

#### **Communication, language and literacy.**

73. Almost all children are likely to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they enter the classes for six year olds. All adults take every opportunity to develop the skills of speaking and listening in discussion and in their interactions with children in their work and play. The school employs good numbers of adults, so that they can join in and support small group activities. At these times, adults use clear speech, ask questions and interact in the play to extend vocabulary and ideas. For example, the teacher took her letters to the children's play post office and asked for stamps, telling them where to deliver the letters. Children enjoy listening to stories and in particular they enjoy talking about the 'big books' in their classroom. A good example of this was the home-made 'Pirate Pete' big book made by teachers to help children learn about rhyming words. Children understand that text has meaning and use pictures to help them talk about what is

happening and to guess the rhyming words. All children handle books carefully and this is reinforced when they share books in group times with adults.

74. Elements of the literacy framework are used well in all classes. There is a gradual introduction towards a full session and group activities are always well planned to be practical and relevant to what is being learned. Rhyming words, puppet play and information and communication technology software such as 'Max and the pirates' are good examples. Children gain a good knowledge of letters and sounds and the alphabet, because these have a high priority with teachers at all times. They encourage children to use their 'jolly phonics' sounds and actions to identify initial and final sounds in words. Children learn to sing the alphabet song. They enjoy these activities and learn well. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year, almost all have a good vocabulary of words, which they recognise, have a good knowledge of letters and sounds and are using this knowledge along with pictures to help them read and write simple sentences.
75. In all classes, teachers encourage children to think of themselves as readers and writers, whatever their stage of development. A good range of books is available and children take these home very regularly, to share with parents. Parents give very good support to sharing and enjoying books with their children. Good supplies of paper, pens and crayons are available in play areas. Children are encouraged to write confidently and independently, identifying initial and final sounds of words they don't yet know and using the 'magic line' for middle sounds. The teaching is good and there is a consistent approach to the development of language, writing and reading skills. Consequently, children make good progress in this area of learning.

### **Mathematical development.**

76. This area of learning is taught well and because of this, the children learn well and almost all reach the early learning goals. A good number are likely to reach Level One of the National Curriculum by the time they enter the classes for six year olds. Teaching is good and teachers in the foundation classes help children to see mathematics all around them and encourage children to think as mathematicians. Counting the numbers of candles and matching claps is a good example of this in birthday assemblies. Activities are carefully chosen and resources used well to ensure that children develop secure counting and number skills. A washing line of pegged numbers is used skilfully for example, to help children identify missing numbers and the numbers before and after a specific number. Their number fans, which are used regularly, enable children to identify and match numbers individually and check that they have the right number by counting the spots. Additionally, it helps teachers to assess children's knowledge. At these times, learning support assistants are used profitably to record targeted children's responses. Other enjoyable activities such as number rhymes and songs feature frequently. It is because of the good variety of interesting and exciting practical games and activities, which are provided to reinforce mathematical work, that children learn well and enjoy mathematics.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world.**

77. Through a well-planned wide curriculum, children are helped to learn more about the world. They talk about where they live and compare and contrast different types of houses. Past and present events in their lives and their families are discussed, helping children to start to understand how time passes. In addition, they are encouraged to answer and ask questions about why things happen. The floating and sinking activities were an example of this. Children were predicting what would happen, by making sensible guesses about a variety of objects, which they then placed in the water tray. Other activities such as cooking biscuits enabled children to watch how ingredients changed when mixed together and how they changed again when they were cooked. Children are learning to use the small directional computerised robot. For example, they guess the number of presses to reach a required point and learn to turn it to the left and right. The good teaching supports the children in investigating their surroundings and encourages them to find out things for themselves. By the time they enter the class for six-year-olds, they have attained the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Physical development.**

78. Good access to the school hall and the newly constructed outside play area, are major factors in the good progress children make in this area of learning. The teaching is good and offers appropriate physical challenges. Children use a range of equipment and activities, which are imaginative and enjoyable. They role play pirates on a ship, for example, when dancing to their pirate music. They make up short sequences of movements and are confident about showing these to each other. When using a range of small climbing and balancing apparatus, they develop the concepts of on and off, over and under. The good provision of a wide range of practical activities gives children varied opportunities to handle tools, construction apparatus and malleable materials. For example, they make pirate boats from play dough or build them from Lego. It is because of the good teaching and good provision of resources that children make good progress and reach the required standards for physical development.

### **Creative development.**

79. By the end of the foundation stage, children have learned well and reach the required standards for this area of learning. Work on the walls indicates good opportunities to paint, print, observe and draw and there is good use of the computer for children to make patterns and pictures. Children regularly sing songs and make music, sometimes using instruments. In child-initiated activities for example, a group of children were making music with a teacher. On other occasions, children use their bodies to make sounds such as clapping, beating and stamping and they march, identifying the basic beat of the music. They learn a good range of songs and rhymes and have good opportunities for role-play and dressing up. As a result of the good teaching and good provision, children learn well and reach the required standards in this area of learning.

## **ENGLISH**

80. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests showed that standards attained by seven-year-olds were below the national average in reading and writing. They were well below in reading and below average in writing in comparison with similar schools. Standards for eleven-year-olds were in line with the national average and with those of similar schools. This is good achievement taking into account the below average standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The school is working with a large number of pupils with special educational needs and therefore the similar school comparisons made do not reflect the value added by the school to reach these standards. Over the last 2 years, the performance of seven-year-olds has shown a slight decline in reading and writing, although the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level of 2B in reading and writing has increased. This is a direct result of targets set by senior management to improve pupil achievement at Key Stage 1. Standards remained constant for eleven-year-olds over a two-year period. Results in 2000 also show that girls often outperform boys. The school is aware of this and has taken steps to provide focused support for boys. The school has set realistic literacy targets for this year.
81. Inspection findings broadly reflect these outcomes, with pupils' progress against their prior attainment being satisfactory when they are seven and good when they are eleven. This is mainly due to the impact of the literacy strategy, good quality teaching and the way the school has been focusing on weaker areas like writing. It is also linked to the school's major focus on raising standards in the former infant school in order to improve attainment across the school. Pupils currently in Year 1 are now making good progress and are already attaining satisfactory, and sometimes good, standards.
82. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below expectations. It is in line with expectations by the age of eleven. Whilst the majority of pupils in Year 2 listen attentively and those of higher ability respond well when speaking, many pupils do not actively participate in discussion, for instance when responding to texts. However, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. This is because more planned opportunities are being provided for speaking and listening both in terms of direct teaching of these skills and in the range of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and use talk as a tool for learning. By the age of eleven, pupils engage well in speaking and listening activities and this is due to a large extent to the quality of

teaching and specifically because pupils are presented with tasks that enable them to explore and investigate texts in an open ended way. This was well exemplified by pupils in Year 5/6 where they discussed poems in groups, used a scribe, and shared and developed their ideas in a mature way that enabled all members in the group to contribute to the discussion. In these sessions pupils worked at a brisk pace, knowing that they would be invited to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Because the task in these lessons was designed as a collaborative activity, pupils engaged in exploratory talk, to negotiate the meaning and the use of stylistic devices in the poems, competently. The cumulative effect of pupils working in this way contributes to the good progress they make in this aspect of the subject.

83. Attainment in reading by the age of seven is below expectations and by eleven is at the expected level for the majority of pupils. By the end of Year 2, high and average attaining pupils enjoy reading and are able to talk about the story and their favourite characters. They name their favourite authors and justify their choices. Many are becoming familiar with the use of the contents page and index to find information. However a high proportion of below average pupils have a limited ability to read simple texts and many read hesitantly. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils use a range of strategies to help them in their reading and discuss a variety of texts. They use these well when they read independently. The majority predict what might happen using their knowledge of the plot and characters and justify their predictions. Pupils recall in clear detail the range of books they have read and comment about their favourite book or author. Although guided reading is a regular feature of the literacy hour, the school does not keep systematic progress records as an outcome. In view of the unsatisfactory standards in reading of the current Year 2 pupils a more thorough analysis of weaknesses in pupils' performance and the consistent use of diagnostic assessment would help in monitoring progress and raising standards. Parents who help with reading at home provide valuable support and this is reflected in the regular comments they make in the contact book. Library skills are taught effectively and are well used for changing and borrowing books. Class libraries are well organised and pupils have easy access to books. However at times, pupils choose books that are not matched to their ability.
84. Attainment in writing, by the age of seven, is below expectations and by eleven it is at the expected level for the majority of pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils develop their ideas in sequence and use capital letters and full stops. They spell most words correctly and some use joined writing. They choose vocabulary imaginatively and are learning to develop a sense of audience, for instance when they write letters or diaries adopting the roles of animal characters. However, whilst many pupils manage to communicate meaning, the majority do not write in sentences, sustain ideas or develop them sufficiently. Handwriting and spelling is variable but pupils make satisfactory progress over time. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils write extensively and produce a variety of narrative and non-narrative texts. The emphasis now given to extended writing is beginning to show a positive impact on progress and standards, particularly for older pupils. Writing is imaginative and shows a good grasp of paragraphing and structure. Opportunities for pupils to draft and redraft enable them to experience a range of styles and make improvements both to the content and presentation of their work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well against their prior attainment. Standards in handwriting and spelling for eleven-year-olds are satisfactory. Good use is made of information and communication technology in lessons to draft work and to make covers for books for younger readers. A distinctive strength in the subject and across the curriculum is the thorough and constructive marking of pupils' work to which pupils respond positively, and which often takes the form of a continuous dialogue with the teacher. This is having a positive impact on the rate of progress pupils make.
85. Pupils' attitudes in English are positive in most lessons. The majority of pupils are keen, well focused and engage well in activities. They listen attentively during presentations and concentrate well throughout lessons, with few exceptions. Older pupils focus well when working on independent tasks and collaborate constructively when working in groups. They behave maturely and are very motivated. Much of the positive responses by pupils are directly linked to the progress they make and the overall quality of teaching seen during the week of inspection.
86. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen and this was in Key Stage 1. Where teaching is good, learning objectives are thoroughly

rehearsed with the pupils to focus their attention and are revisited at the end to check understanding. Effective methods are selected to teach information retrieval skills. This was illustrated in a Year 2 class, where good examples were used to demonstrate how non-fiction texts are organised, thus enabling pupils to apply and transfer these skills in independent work. Skilful questioning is used to consolidate understanding of text features and challenge pupils, for instance to interpret poems beyond their literal meaning. Often in the best teaching, independent tasks are carefully planned and closely linked to the main learning objectives, enabling pupils to make good progress. The last part of the lesson is used to consolidate learning, check understanding and in many cases to share the work, with the whole class acting as an audience. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, this is mainly due to lack of challenge reflected in the use of low-level tasks involving copying and leading to loss of interest. In some instances, insufficient reference to, and use of, the learning objectives to check pupils' grasp of the key points results in work which lacks focus.

87. The school uses the literacy strategy effectively and careful monitoring, evaluation, and staff development have enabled the school to modify aspects of teaching and make improvements. The emphasis now given to extended writing, which was identified by the school as a weakness and which is taught now to all pupils, is beginning to impact positively on progress. It is being reflected in the quality and range of some of the writing produced, for instance in Key Stage 2. Effective assessment procedures have been developed with samples of work being analysed and the use of targets, within a yearly cycle of reviews, are also beginning to impact and point to progress. The use of careful analysis of assessment results and the monitoring of progress is feeding into development planning with appropriate interventions to address the underachievement of boys. Many of these developments are the result of good leadership by the co-ordinator and the contribution of other staff that work with her as a team. In order to raise standards in Key Stage 1, clear and agreed arrangements for the ongoing diagnostic assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in reading should be developed.
88. Literacy is used well across the curriculum. For example, in geography pupils have written reports about the pedestrianisation of the High street and in history they wrote extensively about the Victorians after a visit to Rochester.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. The school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. There is good evidence to show that standards are rising at Key Stage 1; standards at Key Stage 2 have been maintained and are close to the national average.
90. At age seven, the attainment of pupils in the 2000 tests was below the national average. However, there was an improvement over the previous year in the percentage of pupils attaining higher standards within Level 2. This is a direct result of targets set by senior management to address the underachievement of some pupils at Key Stage 1.
91. At age eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2000 national tests was close to the national average, a similar position to the previous year. This is good progress taking into account the below average attainment when pupils move from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The performance of girls exceeded the national average for their age group whilst that of boys was below average. The school is working with a large number of pupils with special educational needs and therefore the comparisons made do not reflect the value added by the school to attain these standards. The majority of pupils make good progress as they move through the key stage. Effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, regular assessment, analysis of on-going test results and setting in Years 5 and 6 are helping to maintain standards at the national average. When compared to schools of a similar type Wentworth's performance in the mathematics tests is around the national average.
92. The inspection confirmed the above results and found attainment at seven to be below the national average. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence from lesson observations shows good progress in Year 1, which, if maintained, augurs well for the future. The effective use of the National

Numeracy Strategy is helping pupils to sharpen their mental arithmetic skills and develop sound strategies for adding, subtracting and multiplying. The school has successfully analysed test data and is using this to improve areas of weakness in pupil learning such as data handling, problem solving and rotation. The pupils identified as having special educational needs attain satisfactory standards in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding of mathematics and make good progress as they move through the school. Lessons are usually adapted and modified well to meet their specific needs. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment at Key Stage 1 and they achieve well at Key Stage 2. This is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. The work for higher attaining pupils is well planned and sufficiently challenging, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6.

93. By the age of seven, most pupils can count satisfactorily and are developing a sound understanding of place value relating to tens and units. Higher attaining pupils are learning to order hundreds tens and units and good teaching of partitioning is helping them to develop this concept. Pupils' knowledge of mathematical language is not as good; for example, when the teacher asks them to think of words that mean 'add' they can only think of 'plus'. After a good deal of prompting they come up with words such as 'sum', 'total' and 'more than'. Most teachers start their lessons with a mental arithmetic session to sharpen pupils' number skills such as ordering numbers by counting forwards and backwards, recognising random numbers and adding on in tens. For lower attaining pupils, most teachers have visual aids, such as number squares, well positioned near the carpet to help them to recognise number patterns and sequences. In the best lessons, teachers' questioning develops a healthy sense of competition and gives pupils the opportunity to display their knowledge of such things as counting, ordering numbers, addition, subtraction and times tables. This aspect of their work is progressing satisfactorily. Teachers use resources well; for example, number lines, writing numbers using the word processor, flash cards for partitioning and multi-link hoops to help pupils understand the missing number concept when adding. The lessons observed were mainly number with some references to shape and time. However, pupils' books show work that covers other aspects of the National Curriculum. For example, the recognition of simple two and three-dimensional shapes, learning to tell the time, measuring using centimetres and metres and a little work on fractions and problem solving.
94. By the age of 11, pupils' mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills improve significantly. Their work is far more accurate and they make sensible estimates. For example, pupils learning about units of time close their eyes and make accurate estimates of 60 seconds. The teacher uses this information to teach the relationship between seconds and minutes and minutes and hours. One higher attaining pupil notices that an easy way to calculate the minutes in an hour is to keep doubling six and adding a zero; for example, 60, 120, 180 etc. In another class, pupils identify three-dimensional shapes such as a rectangular based prism and use good mathematical language to describe their properties. They are challenged by the teacher to make ten different nets of an open cube using squared paper. The higher and average attaining pupils manage to make five nets during the lesson but the lower attaining pupils required a great deal of support from the teacher. The top mathematics set in Year 6 is studying angles. Very good questioning by the teacher, at the beginning of the lesson, reinforces pupils understanding of acute, reflex and obtuse angles. The teacher also makes very good use of resources such as a 360 degree protractor and an overhead projector to consolidate learning. This very good teaching enables pupils to work accurately and measure a range of different angles before drawing angles of their own. Pupils in the lower set are challenged to measure the angles in three different triangles. Most measure with reasonable accuracy and discover that the angles of each triangle add up to 180 degrees. Excellent teaching helps the pupils to extend their learning and use their new knowledge to calculate the third angle of a triangle when two angles are already given. In this lesson, very good deployment of the learning support assistants to give individual support is effective in developing pupils' understanding and increases their confidence. The excellent relationships and effective use of praise motivate pupils and help them to succeed.
95. Numeracy skills are applied satisfactorily in some other subjects. Examples of this are: simple timelines in history; discussion of regular and irregular shapes when looking at different types of rocks in science and the use of maps and charts in geography.

96. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The majority work well individually and when asked, collaborate satisfactorily in smaller groups. Older pupils are attentive and keen to ask and answer questions. They show an interest in their work and some sustain their concentration for long periods of time. However, in some lessons, pupils are too noisy and time is wasted settling them, especially when they are going to or leaving the carpet. Most pupils are polite and willing to explain their work. Presentation of their written work is satisfactory in the lower part of the school and it improves significantly in Years 4, 5 and 6.
97. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Fourteen lessons were observed during the inspection; of these one was excellent, one very good, five good, six satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. All the excellent, very good and good teaching was observed at Key Stage 2. Features of the excellent and very good teaching are: teachers' planning; classroom management; expectations; questioning of pupils to reinforce learning objectives and assess what pupils have learned; challenge for higher attaining pupils and work that is well matched to the ability of pupils with special educational needs. This enables pupils to make good gains in their learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lesson objectives are not made clear to the pupils so they are not always clear about what they are expected to learn. Time is lost because of poor behaviour and this affects the learning of all pupils. In these lessons, pupils of higher ability are not extended and this affects their rate of learning. The use of information and communication technology is developing well. The school has correctly identified a weakness in data handling and is taking steps to address this. Pupils' books are well marked and contain informative comments to help pupils with the next stage of their learning. Mathematical targets are effectively used to overcome areas of individual weakness. Homework is set on a regular basis.
98. Mathematics is well co-ordinated. The school has responded well to the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers and pupils have taken to it enthusiastically. Planning is good and the work given to pupils is closely aligned to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Assessment is very good and the close analysis of test results, optional test papers and the impact of setting in Years 5 and 6 is helping to raise standards. However, in some classes at both key stages, the pace of the mental arithmetic sessions are too slow and pupils sit on the carpet for too long. This leads to some fidgety and off task behaviour.

## SCIENCE

99. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven, attainment was above the national average and that of schools of similar contexts. Girls performed better than boys did. Additionally, the school is working with a large number of pupils with special educational needs and therefore the comparisons made do not reflect the value added by the school to attain these standards. Inspection findings generally show some improvement in attainment at age seven and similar findings to 2000 results for pupils aged eleven. Pupils across the school achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of good teaching and a good focus on practical investigations.
100. At Key Stage 1, pupils use simple equipment and begin to make observations about their enquiries. In Year 1 they begin to learn about their own senses, which they use to explore sounds and list different sounds heard on a walk around the school and describe the sounds associated with different musical instruments. In Year 2 they identify the best conditions for growing plants, and, with support, set up a fair test to check their predictions. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary as they plant and record the growth of their seeds. They know that seeds need water to stimulate germination. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 sometimes attain higher than average standards. They know what plants need to grow and predict what will happen to them given certain conditions, and have some idea of what constitutes a fair test. For example 'they will need the same amount of water.' Lower attaining pupils explain what they have done – 'I planted a seed.' Pupils in Key Stage 1 also understand how toys move and they describe their findings, showing how some are pulled and others pushed. Higher attaining pupils test cars on different slopes, predicting and then measuring distance travelled, recording their results in a table and presenting them in block graph format.



101. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in lessons and higher attaining pupils reach standards above those gained nationally. In Year 3, standards are broadly average. They study materials and their properties and describe natural and man-made materials. They use hand lenses to look closely at a wide range of rocks and look for characteristics in each such as shape, weight, colour, size and texture. Pupils use appropriate vocabulary to explain accurately the meaning of words such as 'properties', 'regular' and 'irregular shapes'. Pupils in Year 4 also attain average standards. They undertake more extended study of materials, undertaking tests to find the best material to keep fast food warm. They learn about insulation, properties of different materials and predict which will keep a jacket potato warm for the longest time. Pupils carry out a fair test, recording the temperatures of the potatoes at regular intervals and record these carefully on charts. They are beginning to interpret this information accurately. In Years 5 and 6 standards rise and more pupils attain standards above average. Pupils develop their investigative skills through experiments to find out the effects of different forces. They carry out a series of tests to reduce the air resistance affecting paper propellers. They understand that air resistance is a force that slows moving objects. Their enquiry skills are well developed and they have a good investigative approach to their studies. They work confidently in groups, agreeing the alterations to their paper propellers using appropriate scientific language. They carry out fair tests effectively as they try to find out how to keep their propellers airborne. They record their findings and present results neatly and objectively. They make predictions and give valid reasons for the outcomes of their investigations. Higher attaining pupils explain the implications of their design changes. They consider the factors surrounding a fair test and make valid comments about the need to undertake such tests from the same height. They show clear evidence of understanding the scientific implications of their own investigations.
102. The quality of teaching is good overall and two lessons seen were very good. This has a significant and positive impact on the quality of learning and pupil achievement. Teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where pupils make the best progress. Across the school lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Preparation is detailed and teachers use a range of simple but practical examples to help pupils understand. For example in Year 2 the teacher used a variety of seeds to explain to pupils that seeds come in different shapes and sizes. Teachers model and demonstrate in almost every lesson. They give good and careful explanations to foster scientific understanding. The range of activities provided challenges pupils. Pupils enjoy science, work well together, discuss their findings and share resources. Teachers are careful to build on previous learning as pupils move through the school. For example, in Years 5 and 6 the teachers enable pupils to talk about their own knowledge of forces and sounds before giving them a range of information and developing their knowledge further. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and show respect for each other and their equipment because of the teachers' good management and the provision of interesting and challenging activities. Teachers are aware of the range of needs and abilities within each class, although appropriate support is not always planned or provided to ensure that pupils with additional needs as well as those with higher attainment are suitably catered for and challenged. However most pupils make good progress in lessons and some make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually very good.
103. Science is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken an analysis of pupils' performance in last year's National Curriculum standardised tests to ensure that identified weaknesses in learning are addressed more effectively. A good programme of monitoring has been implemented to ensure that teaching is consistent across the school and that pupils achieve well. Assessment of pupils' day-to-day work and scientific understanding through regular testing is good and having a positive impact on learning. Planning is a strength of the science teaching; however, delivering a balanced curriculum to classes covering two age groups is an area for development appropriately identified in the long-term plans for the subject. The availability of good resources and interesting science displays promote an effective learning environment.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Standards in art and design are at the nationally expected levels at the age of seven and eleven years. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment, although their achievement is better in lessons where there is a good focus on skills' development.

105. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and overall is satisfactory. Variation occurs in the planning and the teaching of art skills. In the satisfactory lessons, planning is brief and there is just a little mention of skills to be taught. In the good teaching, there is a good level of detail to planning and clear direction and thought is given to how skills will be taught and developed. For example, a lesson with older pupils was clearly focused on pupils adding colour and texture to the headwear they were making, linked to the Creation story. Different skills to create texture were clearly demonstrated and at the end of the lesson, pupils evaluated their work in respect of how this was achieved. Overall, the pupils learn at a satisfactory rate, although sometimes learning is good as a result of the good direct teaching of skills.
106. Younger pupils experience a range of techniques and use a variety of media. They draw and paint vegetables, for example. Blot prints and collage owls are other examples of different techniques acquired. Good use is made of the computer in art and there are good examples displayed in classrooms. Appropriate links are made with the work of famous artists. Follow up work to a theme of 'Art in Nature' indicated that pupils had studied Van Gogh and made their own collage sunflower pictures. In other classes, there is evidence of the work of Monet being studied. By the age of seven, they have learned to speak about the similarities and differences between their own work and that of others, but their ability to evaluate and know how to make improvements is less developed.
107. As they grow older, pupils continue to enjoy using a range of media and improve their skills and techniques. Good examples of clay work are well displayed in the front entrance. Work becomes more detailed. For example, the sketches of hands displayed in one classroom show good attention to detail. Work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. A particularly good example of this is the work completed by many classes, linked to favourite books. Examples of well-designed book covers can be seen in many classes. Good links are also made with the environment, such as work displayed linked to Bowman's Heath. Pupils are interested in the topics they study and think carefully about their work, discussing ideas with each other. By the time pupils are eleven, they explore ideas and develop their work through their knowledge of materials. They have learned to improve and modify their work as they go along and are accustomed to evaluating their own and each other's work.
108. The subject is well led. A new policy and planning system is being devised and teachers' and pupils' work is regularly monitored. Assessment systems are not formally recorded, but work is matched against the expectations in national guidance. A clear plan for the development of art is written annually and there is a good level of resources.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. There was limited opportunity to observe the teaching of design and technology during the inspection week. However, evidence gained from the scrutiny of work, teachers planning and displays around the school shows standards in the subject to be at the expected level at the age of seven and eleven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment in both key stages.
110. In Key Stage 1 pupils create playgrounds. They explore a range of full-sized playground equipment and then assemble and join components to construct models of playgrounds by using a variety of materials such as Meccano. They create 'dream playgrounds', some of which include items such as a pets corner, snow room and slide with a safety mat. Most make good use of drawings to communicate their ideas. They carry out simple evaluations and consider fitness for purpose, for example "I would put steps in the snow room so that people could get in". They make good use of simple sliding mechanisms to create moving pictures.
111. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by Year 4 competently explore mechanisms and how they work. They explore the usefulness of a variety of fasteners prior to designing and making their own money containers. They use decorative techniques such as embroidery. Styles and fitness for purpose are considered, designs are labelled and simple evaluations are undertaken. They learn

that joining techniques need to be secure and strong. For example, pupils make comments such as, "If I did this again I would sew it and not stick it".

112. By Year 6 drawings are clearly labelled using the appropriate vocabulary. When investigating structures pupils identify which parts are the strengtheners. Good use is made of a variety of joining techniques, step by step plans and labelled diagrams when making shelters. They know that there are many different shelters built for a variety of purposes. Some pupils make effective use of electrical circuits to achieve results that work. Evaluations are clearly based on fitness for purpose. Overall, pupils' skills in writing help them to explore practical considerations in design and technology projects. There is little evidence that information and communication technology is used to support the subject.
113. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and this was in Year 3 so an overall judgement on teaching and learning is not possible. In this lesson pupils were looking at packages in order to assess their fitness for purpose. They made satisfactory gains in discovering what the packages were made of, how they had been strengthened and deciding if they were the correct size. They gained knowledge of nets and how complex 3D shapes can be made using a net. However, the teacher was inclined to over direct the lesson, which did not give pupils enough opportunities to explain their ideas. From the work seen it is obvious that teachers ensure that both the design and make elements of the subject are covered through a variety of activities appropriate to each key stage. This ensures satisfactory gains in pupils learning of the subject. Pupils learn the skills of designing and making using a variety of materials and design processes. They gradually improve their ability to evaluate products for their usefulness. Evidence from the lesson seen and from the scrutiny of work indicate that the main weakness in the teaching is the limited attempt made to closely match work to pupils' differing learning needs. However there are currently no assessments in place for this subject in order to help teachers do this.
114. Since September 2000 the school has been making satisfactory use of national guidelines to ensure the subject is taught appropriately across the school. However, the school is fully aware of the need to adapt the national guidelines in order to more closely meet the needs of pupils, assess gains in pupils' learning and ensure a better match of work for pupils in the mixed age classes. The school is currently in the process of updating its policies and schemes for the foundation subjects. Each subject is considered as the policy is reviewed. Design and technology is due for a full review in autumn 2001. There is currently a temporary co-ordinator in post, who is maintaining an overview of the subject until a new co-ordinator is appointed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

115. Pupils make satisfactory progress irrespective of gender and social circumstances and, whilst there are some gaps in their knowledge and understanding, standards are in line with expectations by the age of eleven. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
116. Pupils further down the school have received a less rounded curriculum than those currently in Year 6 but a new scheme of work is beginning to address shortcomings, mainly in physical geography. Good teaching of the local area from Key Stage 1 onwards has helped pupils' knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and what is distinct about Dartford. For example, younger pupils compared Dartford with the village of Haughton Kirby whilst older ones studied Stanton in Peak. Year 1 pupils write to pupils at a school in Hartland on the Devon coast and older pupils have pen pals in Chicago. When engaged on such work, the pupils' expertise in extended writing is sharpened and good examples were seen of report writing on the pedestrianisation of the High Street. Good teaching of physical geography at Key Stage 2 has enabled pupils to understand the effect of mountains and rivers on people and the landscape. Not only do pupils understand the various features but they also discuss related current events such as the effects of recent flooding and avalanches. Fieldwork studies are satisfactory with most pupils having produced surveys and maps.
117. There have been shortcomings in the past in the organisation of the geography curriculum from Key Stage 1. Additionally, less time and emphasis was given to the subject than is now the case. As a

result, Year 6 pupils have some gaps in their knowledge and skills. For example, many do not have a secure knowledge of Ordnance Survey maps and important symbols. Their knowledge of where important places and countries are to be found is limited. Often, they have a rough idea of where some places are through their work in history topics but, thereafter, their grasp of distance and direction on a wider scale is limited. Nevertheless, the overall quality of the teaching of human geography in the school is good and means that the subject contributes to pupils' cultural and social understanding. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communication technology to help their geographical understanding: younger pupils use computers for street mapping and older pupils contribute to a database when producing traffic surveys. Information and communication technology is also used well by older pupils when producing their reports and projects of the theme of water.

118. Lessons were only observed at Key Stage 2 during the inspection but evidence was also gained from a study of planning, discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of the latter's work. The quality of the individual lessons observed during the inspection was good; one was very good. However, the overall effect of the teaching is satisfactory, as learning opportunities have not always been fully exploited in the past because of the organisation of the curriculum. Additionally, the co-ordinator is aware that some staff lack the confidence to teach some aspects of geography and is planning the relevant training. Nevertheless, particularly effective teaching was seen in a Year 5/6 class when the effects of change on an alpine village were graphically illustrated by showing a video of a small village in the 1980s. After looking at the life-style of a small farmer the teacher then showed a 2001 holiday brochure where the once small village of Livigno now occupied eight pages. Most teachers also ensure that pupils are given good opportunities to discuss current issues.
119. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and is well qualified to lead the required development. She is currently developing the scheme of work and is planning to extend the limited pupil assessment in place. Currently, teachers have few procedures to help them check pupils' progress and to plan their lessons. She has, however, improved the quality of resources and is planning to buy more books for the literacy hour, which have a specifically geographical content. As a result, the subject has a good capacity for improvement.

## **HISTORY**

120. The pupils' attainment in history is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. During the inspection only two lessons were seen at each key stage; however, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that pupils achieve satisfactorily in lessons and over time.
121. By the age of seven, pupils' work shows that they can make comparisons between their childhood and past times. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils begin to understand the passage of time by contrasting holidays now with the holidays that their grandparents and great-grandparents might have taken. They look at books and photographs and good prompting by the teacher encourages them to look more closely and note the similarities and differences in clothing. In a lively discussion, pupils work out the main holidays of the year and the months in which these fall; then with the help of the teacher they arrange these to make a simple timeline.
122. By the age of 11, pupils have developed a much better sense of chronology. Pupils learning about the ancient Egyptians are able to place ancient Egypt on a timeline with other historical events such as dinosaurs, the Romans, Guy Fawkes and the present day. In a lesson to introduce the Egyptians, the pupils share their existing knowledge with others in the class. The higher attainers know Tutankhamun and Cleopatra were rulers and one mentions that they were Pharaohs. In another class, pupils explore the concept of settlement and invasion. They scrutinise pictures, video film and research a CD-ROM for information about the Anglo-Saxons. In doing this they discover how historical evidence tells us how people lived in the past. They discuss the archaeological finds on the burial ship at Sutton Hoo. They express their opinions about the craftsmanship of the Anglo-Saxons in relation to the combs, jewellery, shields and other archaeological finds. This helps them to determine that the Anglo-Saxons must have been good traders. The inspection of pupils' work in Year 6 shows some extensive and good quality writing about the Victorians, which was stimulated by their visit to Rochester.

123. Most pupils have positive attitudes to history and their behaviour is satisfactory. They show enthusiasm and interest in researching for information and most are keen and eager to answer questions.
124. The limited sample of teaching observed was satisfactory overall. Altogether five lessons were observed; teaching was good in two and satisfactory in the others. In a good lesson in a Year R/1 class, the teacher's clear introduction enabled pupils to develop a greater understanding of chronology. Good use was made of resources such as a blank time line to aid understanding. In a year 3 lesson the teacher's good subject knowledge was used well to extend pupils' knowledge of Ancient Egypt. However, in some classes pupils sit on the carpet for too long and time is lost because they call out and chatter too much.
125. The curriculum includes a good range of visits to places such as Dover when studying the Romans, and London to visit the British Museum to find out more about the Egyptians. Teachers are starting to use information and communication technology effectively for research purposes.
126. The history co-ordinator provides sound leadership. Resources are good, artefacts are steadily being built up and there are topic boxes for each aspect of history taught. At Key Stage 1, the curriculum follows the recently published national guidelines. At Key Stage 2 the school is working closely with the local authority history advisor to improve the policy and develop clearer curriculum guidelines and better assessment procedures. This work is progressing well and a first draft of the policy and scheme of work is now in place. The quality assurance procedures used in the core subjects have not yet been introduced for history. Teachers' planning is checked but portfolios of work have not been developed. There are good displays for history around the school and many include example of pupils' work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

127. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are in line with the standards expected at seven and above the national expectations at age eleven. There is evidence of good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment at age seven and they achieve well at eleven. The good achievement at Key Stage 2 is linked to the good teaching they receive in the subject on a regular basis. All pupils keep samples of information and communication technology in their books and the co-ordinator maintains a portfolio of pupils' work.
128. By the age of seven, pupils have developed good control of the mouse and are becoming familiar with the keyboard layout. They can use a variety of programs including word processing, graphics and databases. They can collect information about their friends' favourite colours, produce graphs and print them out. From an early age pupils are introduced to programming various items including floor robots and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Year 1 pupils understand and control their 'Roamers' very effectively. Pupils in Year 2 see a clear connection between a sequence of programmed instructions and the movement of the floor robot, planning and evaluating their control programs. All pupils are confident in using computers and can load and change programs when required.
129. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge of word processing, using desktop publishing programs and editing. They can use CD ROMs and the Internet to locate and interrogate information relevant to their work. For example Year 6 use the Internet to find and print out information about mountain ranges across the world.
130. They can change font size and style, highlight and underline text and cut and paste information from different programs to create a multi media presentation. They understand how computers make it simple to draft and edit work. Pupils in Year 3 show clear progression from Year 2 in using publishing programs to produce a greetings card. The editing was more controlled and a wider variety of effects was produced. Pupils use computers effectively in many subjects, for example in Year 3 pupils were able to use a geography simulation to create maps by clicking on and dragging

various symbols onto the maps. Pupils are familiar with the vocabulary of information technology. Lower attaining pupils are confident in word processing, those in Year 6 being able to change words to make them more interesting. By Year 6 higher attaining pupils are confident in their use of information and communication technology to organise, improve and present information for specific purposes and audiences in various forms and styles. For example they are developing the desktop publishing skills to produce talking books using graphics, pictures and sound to make an interactive product.

131. Teaching skills have contributed significantly to the good standards attained and pupils' good achievement by eleven. The recently completed information and communication technology suite and the appointment of a well-qualified learning support assistant have given the subject a boost. Teachers apply themselves diligently to developing a progressive curriculum that is meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities in most subjects. Lessons are well planned and pupils respond well to the teachers' firm management and interesting and challenging tasks. Tasks are well structured and build on pupils' understanding in carefully graded, clear steps. Support staff are deployed very effectively to ensure that pupils are challenged through good use of open questions. These skills enable all pupils to make good progress. Timetabled sessions and rota systems in classrooms ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills and become efficient. Many Key Stage 2 pupils join lunchtime computer clubs to extend their skills further. The school hopes to extend its staff training in information and communication technology to parents as part of the National Opportunities Fund scheme.
132. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear vision of future developments in information and communication technology at the school. She has a good understanding of what needs to be done and is well supported by staff and governors. The school's new web site, developed with the support of a parent, will provide global access to the school. Pupils are making increasing international use of the Internet to send and receive e-mails from friends around the world. The co-ordinator has plans to improve present systems of assessment and recording of pupils' information and communication technology achievements. The school has invested a substantial part of its budget into information technology equipment, which is having a positive effect on standards.

## **MUSIC**

129. By age seven and eleven, attainment in music is in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment at the end of both key stages.
130. Pupils in Year 1 practise using instruments and work in pairs with one pupil conducting whilst the other responds by playing the instrument. They recognise and explore how different sounds can be made and changed. They play untuned instruments with confidence, rehearse and perform in groups and present their work to the rest of the class.
131. Pupils in Year 3, listening to an audiotape, recognise how sounds can be used to describe different sounds, for instance those coming from a building site. They sing a series of different songs with different tunes in accompaniment to the tape. As they practise, they recognise the significance of pauses to take breath and identify and copy a range of rhythmic patterns.
132. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress especially in singing as they are increasingly exposed to a range of musical traditions. This is partly attributed to the use of an external tutor, who works closely with teachers and provides pupils with a range of musical experiences and singing practice.
133. Pupil's attitudes to music are good throughout the school. They participate in lessons with real enjoyment, and persevere in their efforts to improve their performance. They work well together, showing respect for each other. They treat instruments with care and readily help when they need to be moved or stored away. All the pupils taking part in extra musical tuition enjoy the sessions and are highly motivated and keen to improve their skills.

134. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory. In the best teaching, lessons are effectively planned and structured, providing appropriate challenge and guidance to pupils which enthruses them for the subject. Lessons are appropriately introduced with reference to skills and knowledge acquired previously and provide ample opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their performance. Good use is made of questioning to extend pupils' understanding of sounds and of the teachers' own knowledge to promote learning, for instance when pupils are enabled to listen carefully and perform effectively. Where teaching has less impact on pupils' learning, this is associated with insufficient support and explanation of what is expected from group tasks.
135. The provision for music is enhanced through additional instrumental tuition for two recorder groups, a choir and a band programme including individual tuition. Good use is made of a musical grant to provide free instrumental tuition for a number of pupils and to provide for extra tutoring.
136. There is no system for assessing or recording pupils' progress in music from one year to the next. The school is currently piloting the use of national guidance and the co-ordinator is in the process of auditing resources to ascertain what is required for particular units. There is also no monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject and the role of the co-ordinator is not sufficiently focussed on improving teaching and learning or raising standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. By age seven and eleven attainment in physical education is in line with national expectations. Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. A good number achieve well in swimming and games.
138. Lessons were seen during the inspection in gymnastics and games but evidence was also gained from discussions with staff and pupils and from a study of planning. Standards in games are good as a result of good teaching, regular lessons and staff, coaches and parents giving freely of their time and expertise to develop an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. This coupled with generous indoor provision, means that talented players do well, and compete in a wide range of events in a number of sports. Standards in swimming are good as a result of good timetable provision and well-organised teaching. For example, teachers quickly place pupils into appropriate groups and work at a brisk pace. Teachers, including the head teacher, who organises the sessions, are confident and knowledgeable about swimming and the majority of pupils can swim 25 metres by the age of eleven. These excellent opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to sport and to the development of team spirit. Boys and girls support each other and the subject makes a good contribution to moral and social development. These factors ensure that the quality of learning for pupils of all abilities is at least satisfactory; often it is very good.
139. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is overall satisfactory. Lessons seen were at least satisfactory; occasionally they were good or very good. Teachers plan and organise lessons methodically and this helps pupils to improve their skills systematically. All teachers dress appropriately and some provide useful demonstrations that help pupils to learn new skills and to understand what is required. Usually, they give clear instructions, expect pupils to respond promptly and are vigilant in matters of safety. The best teaching injects pace into the lesson. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson pupils enthusiastically went through a vigorous warm up, which was followed by a quick series of demonstrations from the teacher. Pupils immediately set to work to improve a series of balances, using partners. A weakness in some lessons that were otherwise satisfactory was that instruction and organisation took too long, so that pupils did not have enough time to perform, practise and improve their skills. The best teaching seen used good examples of pupils' performance and self-assessment to stimulate improvement but this was not always emphasised sufficiently in all lessons. Some teachers are more proficient in the subject than others but all plan carefully and have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils enjoy their physical education lessons, work sensibly and try hard to improve their performance.
140. The co-ordinator is planning to have a scheme of work in place shortly; she is also aware that some colleagues require more in-service training in gymnastics. Nevertheless, the school makes good

use of its two spacious halls and a nearby pool to enhance standards. Currently, there is no system for assessing and recording the attainment and progress of pupils and this has an adverse effect on the quality of learning. Provided, however, that the new scheme of work builds on the positive provision enjoyed by the pupils, the school is in a good position to advance further.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

141. Pupils meet the standards of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment as a result of appropriate curricular provision and satisfactory teaching.
142. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have a satisfactory understanding of many features of Christianity and a suitably broad knowledge of other major world faiths. For example, they know about the main festivals, features and stories associated with Hinduism and of Islam. Good work was seen from younger pupils on Jewish festivals and older pupils wrote interesting accounts of the Seven Pillars Of Islam. They understand that praying is communicating with God and higher attaining pupils, in particular, are aware of the relationship between Judaism, Jesus and Christianity.
143. The quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. The imaginative use of resources and the contribution of other subjects help pupils' understanding, which promotes a multi-faith perspective. Thus pupils show in discussion that they understand the symbolism associated with light and candles in the Christian faith and in Hinduism. Most pupils reflect satisfactorily on wider aspects of religious belief and meaning. For example, they understand that world faiths have a Supreme God. A particular strength is their understanding of the fact that faith involves feeling and emotions. Their understanding benefits from some imaginative contribution from other subjects: thus in art and design older pupils make masks associated with characters in both Christian and Jewish beliefs about the Creation. Younger pupils make Kiddush cups. Features of effective teaching, which helps learning and attainment, were clear planning, good subject knowledge and thought for teaching strategies. Currently, however, the quality of learning and pupils' achievement is handicapped by the absence of a coherent scheme of work and no assessment of pupils' achievement
144. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and this contributes significantly to their quality of learning. They show both interest and curiosity. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils were very interested in finding out about the symbolism of candles and older pupils asked and answered questions well about religious vestments and their various colours.
145. During the inspection older pupils received a visitor from the Church Army but overall there is limited provision for visits and visitors. Limited examples were seen of extended writing, particularly from older pupils, and the subject's contribution to the development of information and communication technology skills is limited.
146. The subject is managed by an experienced co-ordinator who is working hard to ensure that the revised curriculum meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. She has succeeded in improving and increasing the quality of resources. These are used effectively in lessons to stimulate discussion.