

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OLD BEXLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bexley, Kent

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101452

Headteacher: Peter Wilson

Reporting inspector: Frances Forrester  
11590

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 May 2003

Inspection number: 246123

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hurst Road, Bexley Kent
Postcode:	DA5 3JR
Telephone number:	01322 527981
Fax number:	01322 553321
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Diment
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11590	Frances Forrester	Registered inspector	Foundation stage curriculum Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents
18381	Gordon Ewing	Team inspector	Science Geography History	
32952	Sandy Francis	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education Educational Inclusion	
18116	Chris Taylor	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15639	Chris Spencer	Team inspector	English as an additional language. Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
32302	Glendra Read	Team inspector	English	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
25787	Edmond Morris	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

*icp*  
360 Lee Valley Technopark,  
Ashley Road  
London  
N17 9LN

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has 600 pupils, 300 boys and 300 girls. It is situated in Old Bexley village on a site that originally was two schools. Most pupils live in or around the immediate locality. The school is bigger than most other primary schools. Other important information is that:

- 20 pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is low;
- 58 pupils have special learning needs, which is also below average;
- 17 pupils come from heritages other than English and are learning English as an additional language. This is low for a school of this size. Their home languages are Gujarati, Punjabi, Cantonese, and Bengali. Two pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition;
- the nursery has 52 places, and there are 28 boys and 23 girls attending part-time;
- when the children start school in the Reception class, many have had some form of pre-school education. They have already learned some basic skills in literacy and numeracy before they are admitted;
- there are equal numbers of boys and girls, but some gender imbalance in Years 1 and 5;
- the school has recently opened a unit for pupils with autism.

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

This is an effective school with many very good and excellent features. The leadership and management are very good, and are the driving force behind the school's improving performance. All pupils achieve well because teaching is good. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reach or surpass the standards that are expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. The school manages its finances most efficiently and it provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher is very good, and he and his deputy, together with key members of staff, make a very strong team. The action taken to prioritise areas for school development is outstanding and this has a positive impact on raising standards.
- The school has good results in English, mathematics and science.
- The school has excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour. Pupils have very good attitudes. They are most enthusiastic about their work, and their behaviour is very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- There are excellent links with parents, which has a substantial impact on pupils' performance.

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

- The outside play provision, resources and the opportunities for higher attaining children in the nursery and Reception classes.
- The use of space in the nursery and the match of staff to the demands of supervising a wide range of activities.
- Teachers' marking and pupils' handwriting, spelling and the presentation of work.

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

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

The school has made very successful improvements since 1997. The leadership and management, particularly the role of teachers with responsibility for a subject, have been improved. The special educational needs provision is more supportive. Pupils computer skills have improved significantly. Their spiritual, moral and social development has been enhanced and is now very good. The way that the school cares for its pupils is also much better than it used to be. This aspect of the school's provision is very good. Pupils' learning opportunities have been improved, as has the range of additional activities for pupils after school. The school's partnership with parents is

stronger and is now excellent.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	B	A	C
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	B	C	B	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Almost all of them attain the standards expected nationally, and many reach the higher standard of Level 5. However, you can see in the table above that, when their results are compared with schools that serve communities with similar numbers of pupils with free school meals, these results are average. The school's results vary slightly each year because classes differ. Inspectors found no evidence of any pupils missing out. Boys and girls achieve similar standards, and pupils with special learning needs make good progress. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported. They work to their capabilities, becoming fluent speakers of English by Year 6. The school has agreed high targets for future years to increase the numbers of pupils attaining higher standards. It has the ability to achieve them and it is determined to increase the number of pupils who reach Level 5 each year.

Pupils in Year 2 also do well, and the results of the 2002 national tests in reading and writing are high and, in mathematics, they are above average. When these results are compared with similar schools, they are average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Inspectors found that in lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve good standards in information and communication technology. Throughout the school, pupils aged seven and eleven attain in line with national expectations in all the other subjects including religious education, which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The Reception children also achieve appropriately and they make good progress in their learning. When they move to Year 1, they have attained the standards expected nationally for this age group. However, the most able five year olds could be challenged further, for instance their writing and number work could be further enhanced by more challenging activities.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested in their work, and they willingly contribute imaginative ideas. They are very well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school has excellent procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and they are polite and helpful to visitors. There was no evidence of any bullying or harassment at playtimes during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have strong relationships with their teachers, and this successfully impacts on their personal development.
Attendance	Above average. Pupils are keen to attend school and they do not like being absent.



These aspects are very positive strengths and contributory factors to standards reached and the school's popularity.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The good quality of the teaching has a significant impact on learning. Three quarters of lessons observed were good or very good. In English and mathematics, the teaching is always satisfactory and very often good. In the strongest lessons, the teachers have high expectations of their class productivity and behaviour. They skilfully link work with different subjects, and this makes the topic more interesting for pupils of all abilities. When the teaching is very good, pupils are given work that stretches them and challenges them to think hard. Teachers know their pupils well and they match activities to individual needs. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in Years 1 to 6 and they are given good support and extension activities that challenge them. Teachers make their lessons interesting. This was particularly evident in music lessons, which included drumming and learning songs for playground games. The lessons that were satisfactory did not have the same level of pace and challenge. For instance, in a Reception class, all pupils covered the same writing activity at the same time and it was difficult for the teacher to extend learning for the most able children. In a few lessons, teachers were unable to motivate the whole class because the topic was not presented in an interesting way. Consequently, a few pupils lost interest and as a result they made slower progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides an imaginative range of learning opportunities and additional activities for Years 1 to 6. The nursery and Reception classes provide an appropriately wide range of learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils of all ages with learning difficulties are well supported and they make progress commensurate with their individual ability.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school gives appropriate support to pupils who are learning English as an additional language. It receives positive support from the local education authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The school celebrates its religious faith at all times. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school demonstrates that pupils are truly valued at all times.

There are excellent links with parents. They raise substantial funds for the school. Chaplains from the two local churches make a very positive impact on the school's provision. The school meets all legal requirements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a strong vision for his school. He and his deputy work very well together and are promoting higher standards. The teachers with subject responsibility are enthusiastic and committed to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very effective and they fulfil their legal responsibilities successfully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The action taken to meet the school's targets is very good. There is detailed evaluation of pupils' patterns of performance, and those who are at risk of falling behind their peers are given intensive support.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well.

Teachers and support staff are successfully matched to the curriculum. The accommodation is good, and the school has a satisfactory range of learning resources. The strong leadership and management are having a very positive impact on the quality of education provided. The school takes very positive action to ensure the principles of best value are applied.

## 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>• The school promotes good standards.</li> <li>• Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour.</li> <li>• The school gives very good support to pupils regardless of need.</li> <li>• The school's partnership with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regularity of physical education lessons.</li> <li>• The consistency of homework.</li> <li>• Information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The additional activities after school.</li> </ul>

Parents hold the school in high regard. The inspection team agrees with all the strengths parents identified. Inspectors judged physical education to be meeting legal requirements and in line with national expectations. Homework is regularly given and marked. Inspectors felt that the school does its best to give parents information about pupils' progress. It certainly has very rigorous system in place for tracking pupils' performance. The school's additional activities are very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils are doing well and achieving good results in English, mathematics and science. This is because the school has put a concerted effort into improving the assessment procedures in these three subjects. The school has maintained good standards since the last inspection. The results of the 2002 national tests, which pupils take at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science but when they are compared with schools with similar characteristics they are average results. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels of Level 3, in Year 2, and Level 5, in Year 6, is generally good. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are average but the number of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above average. The school is working hard to improve its performance. It is not complacent, and teachers recognise that pupils could do better. It was disappointed to discover that the progress pupils made from Year 2 to Year 6, was below the national trend. The school improvement plan has already identified correctly the strategies the school needs to adopt to improve its performance.

2. Attainment in English is very good when compared to schools nationally. Speaking and listening is above average overall. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, raising questions and readily rising to the challenges that teachers pose. They eagerly talk together in small groups and listen with respect to each other's contributions. Standards in reading are very good across the school. In all classes, pupils have opportunities to read silently, read to an adult and read in a group during guided reading time. Pupils have weekly school library sessions and they confidently select their books because they have acquired good library skills. Pupils make very good progress in reading because the school makes the teaching of reading a high priority. The standards of pupils' handwriting are not good enough and are inconsistent across the school. The quality of their handwriting varies from class to class and year to year. Daily written work in some classes is untidy, with pupils crossing out errors and forming their letters in an immature way. The teachers lead formal handwriting lessons, but they often forget to reinforce these skills when pupils write in other subjects. Older pupils often print instead of joining letters together. It is noticeable that when the teachers encourage pupils to produce final drafts, after several earlier scripts, these are often very well presented.

3. Pupils do well in mathematics throughout the school. They enjoy the numeracy lessons, and particularly the use of small white boards to calculate and answer simple mathematical problems. Parents are pleased with the schools' standards and they say they have noticed pupils' improved ability to calculate quickly. Pupils work hard to attain good results in mathematics, and they become increasingly numerate and have a good understanding of all aspects of the programme of study. By the time they are eleven years old, they confidently use and apply mathematics skills very well. Most are clearly developing their own strategies for solving problems. Higher attaining pupils are quick to estimate and predict approximate answers; they can also give rational explanations for their reasoning.

4. When pupils first enter the school, they have already learned some basic skills but their speaking and listening is often immature. Those children who spend time in the nursery achieve well and, by the time they transfer to the Reception classes, they have made good progress in their social and emotional development and in becoming confident communicators. Their creative development is also good. In other aspects of their learning, they make appropriate progress. However, the most able five year olds could be stretched further, for instance their writing and number work could be further enhanced by more challenging activities. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children reach or exceed the standards expected nationally in all areas of learning.

5. The school analyses its performance rigorously, and it monitors the quality of pupils' work to check that pupils make the best possible progress. For instance, it discovered that older girls were

underachieving. Teachers took steps to address this problem and, as a result, there is now no substantial evidence that any groups of pupils are at risk of falling behind their peers. Inspectors found no noticeable difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school gives good support to pupils who have special learning needs. There are also particularly good strategies in place for extending gifted and talented pupils. Rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by all pupils and this usually encourages pupils with special educational needs to work hard.

6. Results in English have improved and they are now well above average in national tests. In mathematics, results have remained above average since the last inspection. The school has significantly improved pupils' attainment in information and communication technology [ICT] since the last inspection, when it was below the national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained in art, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education, although the oldest pupils had higher standards in art and physical education. Pupil numbers have increased significantly since 1997 and this, together with an increase in staff, has led to the school's management's strong focus on developing the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Their strategies have proved very successful, but it will take some time before the school sees the impact of these improvements on pupils' performance as they move through the school. Looking at examples of pupils' work and observing standards in lessons, it is clear that in science, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils achieve appropriate standards. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the Bexley Agreed Syllabus.

7. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and pupils make suitable progress. They work to their capabilities and usually achieve appropriate standards by the end of Year 6. They benefit from the working with class assistants in a good range of small group activities. The school receives support from an effective specialist language teacher from the local education authority, but this support is limited. Pupils also achieve well because they receive good intervention and support from their class teachers. The school monitors all pupils and it notes any pupils who do not make adequate progress.

8. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The special needs coordinator is well informed and pupils' have clear individual education plans. These help to keep class teachers well informed. They can easily target groups of pupils to closely monitor their individual progress. This is effective and ensures they achieve as well as they can and make good progress.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a strength of the school. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. This is much the same as it was in the last inspection when behaviour was judged to be very good. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and proud to share their successes, as shown in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were very keen to read their letters purporting to be from a book character. Other pupils spontaneously applauded their efforts. The calm atmosphere promoted by the school encourages pupils to do their best. They settle to work quickly. They are able to work quietly with sustained concentration without adult supervision. The pupils work hard but often their work is untidy with poor handwriting.

10. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. In an assembly for Years 1 and 2, pupils entered quietly and were very well behaved throughout. They sang with enthusiasm and then sat in peaceful reflection, breathing deeply, prior to leaving the hall. Two pupils sensibly operated the projector and took care to cover the trailing wires with a large mat to ensure that no one tripped over. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils understand what standards are acceptable. During lessons, pupils move quickly and quietly around the class to avoid wasting time. The school system of rewards and sanctions works well and, on the rare occasions when pupils act inappropriately, teachers encourage them to learn from their mistakes and make good choices instead. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour, and no instances

of bullying were seen. Pupils play co-operatively at playtime using a variety of playground toys. Two playground monitors regularly help to supervise the playground for the oldest classes. They try to befriend any pupils who are on their own and ensure that lining up takes place efficiently. Lunchtimes are social occasions and pupils behave very well. The lunchtime supervisors report that the pupils respect them. There are no pupils in the school identified as having behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.

11. There are very good relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils report that they like coming to school because they have good friends and like their teachers. Pupils work well together and treat each other with respect, and this impacts positively on their learning and progress. Local vicars regularly take assemblies and talk to pupils in lessons, and this reinforces the very good Christian ethos of the school.

12. Attendance is good and there were no unauthorised absences during the last academic year. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

13. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 undertake research at home beyond the requirements of formally set homework. Pupils participate in a range of extra curricular clubs and there is a good school orchestra. Pupils regularly go on visits and are successful in sporting activities. Their self-esteem is regarded as very important, and every opportunity is taken to enhance this. There is a very effective buddy system in place whereby older pupils are matched with younger pupils to encourage their learning and share their interests. There are regular personal, social and health education lessons, which help pupils to consider how to have good quality life styles. Although a School Council is planned, it has not yet been set up.

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

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. In nearly three quarters of lessons observed, teaching was good, with a further one in ten lessons being very good. Across the school, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory teaching in about one in ten lessons.

15. Pupils benefit from this good teaching and, as a result, their learning is always satisfactory. It is good in about three quarters of lessons. This good teaching and learning is clearly impacting on standards, particularly in English, mathematics throughout the school and information and communications technology in Years 1 to 6.

16. There are no significant differences between the quality of teaching in different year groups. The teaching of basic skills throughout the school is good. As a result of this good teaching, standards in English are very good and mathematics are above average. Most lessons have a clear structure that includes a defined beginning during which the teaching objectives are shared, very clear whole class teaching, activities that promote all pupils' learning and an opportunity at the end for a consolidation of learning. This consistently good teaching across the curriculum promotes pupils' enthusiasm for learning and helps them make good progress during their time in the school.

17. The quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception class was generally good, although three lessons were satisfactory. In the nursery, the teacher plans a wide range of learning opportunities for the children to enjoy. However, the room is too large and this makes it difficult for adults to work closely with a small group of children while supervising other activities. The outside play space is also very large, and it is impossible for children to move spontaneously in or out of the classroom. When there are insufficient people to support the activities, the teaching is only satisfactory. During the inspection, as soon as there were more adults helping, the quality of the teaching became good. In the Reception classes, in the lessons that were only satisfactory the teacher provided insufficient challenge for the higher attainers. For example, writing is taught to all children at the same time. This makes it difficult for the teacher to extend the higher attainers

because the least able pupils require constant help with spellings. In the lesson, the most able children only wrote a very few sentences independently and they lost their concentration at times. Reception teachers successfully promote the children's creativity. In two good lessons the children were working hard to make models of animals from junk material. Their skills were enhanced with very good support from teaching assistants; meanwhile, other children were well occupied with other activities.

18. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. As a result of this they are able to set work that is challenging and promotes pupils' learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory throughout the school. In literacy and numeracy, teachers use planning formats recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In addition, schemes of work recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are modified and used in the other subjects in the curriculum. This planning and use of these schemes of work ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as they move through the school.

19. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. One of the main strengths in teaching is that most teachers know the abilities of their pupils very well. It is common to see three or four similar tasks, but of different degrees of difficulty, during the activities part of a lesson. As a result of this, all pupils make gains in their learning. Most pupils learn something new in each lesson.

20. In order to meet the different learning styles of their pupils, teachers use a variety of methods in their lessons. For example, white boards are frequently used in mathematics lessons. Younger pupils use number fans. The use of these encourages a high level of pupil participation. Most lessons use good visual stimuli to promote the learning objectives. For example, in a good Year 4 geography lesson, pupils collated features on an enlarged map; in a Year 6 history lesson, the interactive white board was used to record pupils' ideas.

21. Teachers manage pupils very well. The ethos of the school is such that all pupils know how to behave. This results in pupils settling quickly to their tasks, a rapid pace to many lessons and a consistently good output of their work. Little time is wasted in lessons, because teachers prepare all resources in advance. These are often placed on pupils' tables ready for them to use when appropriate. When classroom assistants are in class they are used effectively to support their targeted pupils, particularly in group work. Throughout the school, relationships between adults and pupils and pupils themselves are very good and the mutual respect shown has a good impact on learning.

22. Whilst teachers use on-going assessment in lessons well, particularly during the plenary sections at the end of lessons, marking of pupils' books is varied. In the best examples of marking, teachers inform pupils of what they need to do next in order to improve. However, whilst work is always corrected, much of this marking consists of simple ticks and comments and does not help pupils to understand how they can move forward in their work. The homework policy is consistently applied throughout the school and, as a result, this makes a good contribution to pupils' attainments.

23. An example of very good teaching was in a mathematics lesson in Year 4. In this lesson, the teacher was able to offer pupils different levels of questions during whole class teaching. This ensured particularly good pupil participation. Good references were made to mathematical vocabulary, pupils used individual white boards and classroom management was very good. This resulted in a fast pace to the lesson and pupils' learning was very good. The lesson objectives were revisited at the end of the lesson during the plenary and pupils' learning was further extended. In a very good science lesson in Year 5, the teacher used good questioning skills to draw out a high level of discussion to help pupils come to clear judgements about adjusting variables in the conditions required for seeds to germinate.

24. Where lessons are satisfactory, the pace is slower than at other times and pupils become a little restless. Consequently, their concentration slips and this impacts adversely on their learning.

Occasionally, the tasks presented were too challenging and too much time had to be given to revise previous work. This meant pupils' learning was not as fast as it could have been.

25. Pupils with special educational needs are generally taught well. They are often given good support by the learning support assistants and have work that is well matched to their abilities. Consequently their learning is good. Teachers know these pupils well and they are fully integrated into all classroom activities. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress in their learning. There is a combination of in-class and withdrawal support for these pupils and limited specialist support is given by a specialist teacher from the local education authority.

26. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, largely as a result of rigorous monitoring by the senior management team, the sharing of good practice and the impact of training programmes for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

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

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory for pupils in the nursery and Reception classes, and good for older pupils. The teachers cover all areas of learning and the provision for children's personal, social, emotional development, creative development and communication are good. There are weaknesses in the outside play opportunities for children. The nursery play area is very large and difficult for the staff to manage. Consequently the children cannot spontaneously access the facilities for playing outside. The Reception classes have smaller outside play areas, which are grassed. This means that they cannot be used in inclement weather. There is also difficulty for one class to have ready access to this area. This makes it difficult for activities to be available at any time of day.

28. National Curriculum requirements are in place in the rest of the school. The provision of religious education is in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. All statutory requirements are met and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The literacy and numeracy strategies are having an impact on the development of pupils' skills. The provision for information and communication technology is very good. Personal, social, health and citizenship education are provided effectively across the school. Relationships with the local community and partner institutions are effective and provide opportunities for developing the curriculum. All subjects are allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time. Curriculum planning is satisfactory across the school. There are effective links between the school's teaching programme and national curriculum attainment targets.

29. There is very good provision for activities outside lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoy a residential trip every year. There are various clubs developing skills in different areas of the curriculum, including sports, music and cultural activities. A high proportion of pupils attend these clubs and get a great deal from them.

30. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all aspects of learning and ensures that boys and girls have the similar opportunities. Pupils of different ethnicity are fully included in all activities and receive support according to their needs. This provision effectively embraces all the pupils with special educational needs. The curricular provision for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school fully complies with statutory requirements and teachers are well versed in the requirements of the Code of Practice. Classroom assistants and support teachers give effective help to both pupils and teachers. Members of staff know their pupils well, and have good relationships with the parents. This means that any problems are picked up and dealt with early on in the child's school career. Pupils with special educational needs are offered a good range of learning opportunities, which are carefully planned. Support is particularly focused on literacy and numeracy, but is given in other subjects where needed. Many pupils make good progress and some are removed from the special needs register once they no longer need

support. Pupils who have been identified as having particular talents are extended through a range of activities and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good specialist attention and are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons. When such children are identified, the special needs co-ordinator is informed and they are assessed immediately in order that they get the best possible help. Individual education plans are then prepared, which have appropriate targets and are reviewed at least three times every year. Wherever possible, these plans are fully integrated into classroom activities. Parents are involved in the reviews, and close links with outside agencies are maintained. There are effective assessment procedures.

31. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which includes sex and drug awareness education, is good. It is taught right cross the school and it effectively encourages the pupils to behave well, care for each other and to take responsibility. In one class, pupils were learning about how stress makes them feel and how to deal with it. In another, they were learning how to care appropriately for pets. Assemblies also support the PSHCE programme, and visitors from outside the school effectively contribute to the provision. Some teachers use circle time to influence attitudes. This is a controlled discussion in which all have a chance to express their views and a have right to be listened to.

32. The school has links with local businesses, which contribute generously to the summer fair. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. There are very good links with the local churches, and both the Chaplains regularly give up their valuable time to come into the school to make a very positive contribution to school life. There is also a range of cultural visits by local theatre groups. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The school is linked with a range of local secondary schools. Pupils attend the science fair at Dartford Grammar School, and ex-pupils return to undertake work experience. The pupils are also actively involved in charitable work, with well over £1,000 being raised in the current year. At the time of the inspection, there were students undertaking initial teacher training in the school.

33. Spiritual, moral and social provision is very good, and cultural provision is good. The members of staff all provide good role models for spiritual, moral and social provision with the headteacher providing a clear lead.

34. Very good spiritual development is fostered through assemblies, which are primarily Christian in ethos but seek to celebrate pupils' achievements and build a sense of self-esteem. This is effectively reinforced in lessons. Pupils are good at understanding the feelings of others and how things can affect their lives. The school has a spiritual, caring and tolerant ethos that fosters a strong sense of awe and wonder. All pupils are valued and their ideas and beliefs are treated seriously.

35. Moral development is very good. Behaviour seen in lessons and across the school is very good. There is a very clear moral code encapsulated in the school's aims, rules and behaviour policy. Equality and inclusion are included in discussions when problems are tackled. Adults demonstrate the moral code in their teaching, and the older pupils know about the moral codes of other communities and understand the importance of respecting them. There is a mature appreciation of the difference between right and wrong.

36. The social development of pupils is very good. The school is in the process of starting a school council to enable pupils to participate in the democratic process. Pupils engage with the wider community through charitable work. They have the opportunity to experience leadership and responsibility as monitors or as a buddy. Pupils experience residential visits; discuss conflict resolution when they are in trouble and learn to be members of teams in sporting environments. They frequently work well together and the school functions as a supportive, caring, creative and responsible community in which there is much harmony and respect. In particular, the staff demonstrate high levels of teamwork.

37. Cultural development is good. Music is an important feature and is strongly linked to work with choir performances in the Festival Hall and Rochester Cathedral. There are opportunities to



learn recorder in the school, and for pupils to learn instruments at Bexley Music Centre. There are extra curricular clubs for dance and an orchestra. The school has had input from parents from other countries and is looking for ways to improve this area further.

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

38. The welfare of pupils continues to be a high priority of the school, which ensures a high level of care. The school environment continues to be well maintained, and members of staff care for pupils very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school was judged to provide good welfare and guidance. Staff keep detailed information about pupils' individual, personal and medical needs. There are very good health and safety procedures in place; this ensures that any hazards are dealt with quickly and effectively. The governing body is fully involved in the health and safety of the school, and carries out regular risk assessments. Full checks of grounds, buildings and equipment are also carried out regularly. There are very good procedures in place for the administration of first aid, with many staff trained, and medical kits in place throughout the school. There is no designated room for the treatment and care of pupils, but they are sensitively cared for if they are unwell.

39. The school's policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. There is a designated member of staff for child protection, and she ensures that other members of staff, including the non-teaching staff, understand the schools' arrangements and procedures and know what they should do and who to go to should they have any concerns. There is very effective liaison with external agencies when required.

40. The school is excellent at monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, and all pupils are aware of what to do and who to go to if they feel they need support. There are very few instances that require attention, but all problems are taken very seriously by the school and are dealt with efficiently and effectively. There were no incidents of bullying, sexism or racism seen during the week of the inspection.

41. The school is successful in getting pupils to school and in getting them to arrive on time. Parents are very clear about the expectations of the school, and aware of the need to inform the school if their child is absent for any reason. The school complies with the statutory requirements for the recording of attendance. There are good procedures in place to monitor attendance, and there are plans for this system to be reviewed and enhanced with the introduction of an electronic system of recording and monitoring. The education welfare officer gives good support to the school by visiting regularly and visiting families if there is any cause for concern over attendance or punctuality.

42. There are excellent procedures in place for the promotion and monitoring of discipline and behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are consistently applied across the school by all staff. All pupils are aware of the rules and know what will happen if those rules are broken. The school is very proud of the fact that the number of pupils whose names are entered in the achievement book each week outnumbers the names entered in the detention book by well over 10:1. Behaviour at lunch times is also monitored, and good behaviour promoted excellently.

43. The school has very good procedures in place for the monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal needs; staff record information which is passed on to the next class teacher at the beginning of each year. This detailed knowledge allows staff to support pupils very well.

44. There are very good procedures in place for assessment and the analysis of data. All data from the results of tests taken by pupils throughout the school are entered onto a database; this allows teachers to track individual children as well as groups. For example, staff can track pupils by gender, special needs or ethnicity. Analysis of these tests allows teachers to identify where pupils have done well or where there are concerns; this means that they have a precise understanding of the needs of their pupils. Half termly tests in writing, mathematics and science are used for grouping pupils by ability and to set targets; this has a positive impact on teachers'

planning. End of year assessments identify where pupils have not have made progress, and this is highlighted for the next class teacher and an action plan agreed.

45. Assessment files are kept by each teacher; these show that the most rigorous assessments are in English and Maths, but other subjects are also covered. The assessment co-ordinator regularly monitors these files. Self-assessment by pupils is not carried out, although pupils' evaluate their own standards of work in design and technology.

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

46. Parents have a very positive view of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school works exceptionally well with parents, who are always made to feel welcome in the school. Parents are able to discuss any issues or concerns, and contribute to and support the school very well in a variety of ways.

47. Parents have a very positive impact on the work of the school. They are very supportive of the school and contribute very well to their children's learning at home. The majority of parents are happy with the work the school expects their children to do at home, and ensure that it is completed. A small, but significant minority said they would like more work for their children; however, the inspection team found that the homework provided for pupils supports them well. There is a very effective Parent Teacher Association, which raises very large sums of money each year to purchase resources and materials for the school. They have just funded a quiet area for the older pupils, and there are plans in place for a similar area for the younger pupils. The parents organise a range of events, social as well as fund-raising and are actively involved in supporting pupils in the classroom as well as on school visits. Parents are actively encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school, which they do very well.

48. The information provided for parents by the school is good. Parents receive information on a half termly basis on what their children will be doing during the coming term. They receive regular newsletters that keep them informed about what is happening in school, as well as a range of other letters about individual events. The school's documentation is clear and informative, and meets statutory requirements. The school does not yet canvass parents for their views on the school's effectiveness.

49. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through the written annual reports for parents. These meet requirements, but some are descriptive rather than informative. Parents also meet with staff formally at the termly consultation evenings to discuss their children's progress. There are also opportunities for informal discussion at the beginning and end of the school day. The headteacher and his deputy are always willing to discuss any concerns, and this was confirmed by those parents attending the pre-inspection meeting with parents, who said that they are kept well informed, and that the school does listen to parents and responds positively to any concerns raised.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The school's very good leadership has been the driving force for improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. The headteacher has strong Christian values and a firm belief in the principles of good quality education for all pupils. He successfully provides the school with a clear direction. A very strong partnership has been established between the headteacher and his deputy. They work very closely with the school governors, and very successfully with members of staff who have specific additional responsibilities. The staff are generally very enthusiastic and eager to support the pupils. They have a very strong working relationship with each other, and a clear commitment to school improvement. The care that members of staff show for their pupils is impressive.

51. The headteacher keeps the school governors very well informed. The governing body is very enthusiastic about its role in school, and the governors value the headteacher's leadership. There are excellent procedures in place for keeping governors very well informed about the school's progress and the improvements made. The governors very successfully fulfil their legal responsibilities. The school gives regular reports to a school improvement committee. These are informed by feedback from staff with particular subject responsibilities. The school improvement plan is very clear. Very detailed, concise information is given on the action taken to meet the school's targets. The school's review of the school improvement plan impressed inspectors. This is reviewed frequently for its effectiveness and impact on standards. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are particularly rigorous. Very clear information is available to ensure staff and governors are knowledgeable and on track to monitor the school's performance. The governors have clear procedures and a good committee structure. All the key issues from the last inspection have been fully and successfully addressed. The improvements to the role of subject managers are striking. They were criticised in the last inspection and this has been clearly rectified. The coordinators are very enthusiastic about their subjects and eager to monitor standards and influence school performance. The school also has successful infant and junior stage co-ordinators and a very good co-ordinator for special educational needs provision.

52. The school manages its finances most efficiently. There are very good procedures for agreeing a school budget. The headteacher draws up several model budgets for the finance committee to consider. He tries to provide a good level of learning support for individual pupils, including pupils who are deemed gifted and talented. Governors agree the best course of action based on these models and they ratify the budget when they have agreed the best and most efficient plan. As a result, the governors have a very good understanding of the school's finances.

53. The school has recently appointed a coordinator with specialist knowledge for the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. He has suitably reviewed the provision and made suggestions to the senior management for improving outside play provision. The school has also recently introduced monitoring to check the quality of the provision. The nursery accommodation is very spacious and it makes it difficult for a teacher and nursery nurse to supervise a wide range of activities. Members of staff rely heavily on volunteer parents to assist them, but there are times when there is no additional help. There is an appropriate job share situation with two teachers working mornings and afternoons respectively. This does not have a negative impact on the children because morning and afternoon sessions are made up of different groups. However, there are also two nursery nurses who work in school on different days, and consequently it is quite difficult for staff to plan as a team. The outside play area is very large and on two sides of the nursery. If only one person is supervising outside it makes it difficult for them to see all children at once. The nursery staff have organised their day so that all the children play outside at the same time. This means they cannot move spontaneously between the play area and the nursery. The Reception classes have inadequate outside play resources. The outside space is grassed, and often unavailable in winter.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage is the name given to the nursery and Reception classes together. The nationally agreed areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are known as the Early Learning Goals. Children cover activities that promote their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The space is insufficient for the three Reception classes, and one class uses another area, although access to this is not easy. This means that the overall provision in the Foundation Stage needs improving so that outside play is an integral part of children's learning opportunities.

54. The school is doing all it can to ensure pupils are given the best education possible. Children start school with early skills but some have immature speech and only a limited experience of number. From an average starting point they achieve well and make good progress. Those who have special learning needs do as well as they can and achieve standards appropriate to their abilities. The school's strong partnership with parents is clearly impacting on the school's efficiency. Parents raise very significant funds to support school initiatives. The school's great efficiency is successfully sustaining pupil expenditure so that it is very low for an outer London school. Taking this into account, the school gives good value for money.

### **THE SCHOOL'S RESOURCE BASE FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISM.**

55. The school is currently developing a resource base, often called the quiet room, to support eight statemented pupils with autism who are to be drawn from schools within the local borough. At present, there are three pupils on the school's roll who are supported and five more will be added shortly, including one pupil who will be supported by the base in their own school. The resource base has the clear and appropriate aim of assisting pupils with autism towards full integration into mainstream schooling. The admissions policy is also clear and is designed to target those pupils who will benefit the most whilst having as good a spread of ages as possible. Each pupil is allocated to a specific class to help them feel part of the whole school, and they join this class for lessons when appropriate. The pupils are fully included in the life of the school by attending assemblies, taking part in visits and other school activities. For instance, one pupil who is learning to play a musical instrument performs in the school orchestra.

56. One recently appointed full time teacher and four learning support assistants staff the resource base. These are well managed by the very experienced and efficient special educational needs coordinator. This high level of support is essential if the pupils are to be enabled to learn effectively when integrated with their classes, during breaks and when working in the base itself. Many of the systems for supporting and monitoring the progress of the pupils are already in place and operating most effectively. For example, the lunchtime club, established to help the pupils improve their social skills through a balance of planned games and activities, is working very well. Older pupils from Years 5 and 6 volunteer to help in the club on a rota basis and play games with the pupils, who also invite a few friends from their own classes to join in the fun. This provision is proving very useful in helping the pupils in their interactions with their peers as it takes place in a less hectic atmosphere than that found in the main playground.

57. The base has received a good level of funding that has been wisely spent to create an attractive environment equipped with good quality resources and to recruit suitably qualified staff. It is planned to continue to train the learning support assistants in their specific roles and also have some whole school training to help all staff understand the specific needs of the pupils and strategies to help them integrate and learn effectively. Parents of pupils throughout the school are very supportive and it is a strong indication of how highly the school is regarded that it was chosen to house this exciting and educationally useful facility.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to raise the school's standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. improve the Foundation Stage by:
  - reviewing the use of space in the nursery, in order to better match the number of staff to the demands of supervising a wide range of activities;
  - reviewing the arrangements for outside play, including resources, in order to make better use of the space available;
  - enhancing the opportunities for children to learn through their outside play;
  - ensuring there is consistent provision throughout the day of suitable activities for challenging the higher attaining children.

[Paragraphs; 4, 17, 27, 53, 59 – 68]

2. improve the quality of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work by:
  - ensuring recorded work is tidily set out, especially in mathematics, that appropriate labels are included in all diagrams and illustrations, and that rulers are used more consistently;
  - applying consistency to the teaching of handwriting across the school and ensuring teachers pay full attention to letter formation and style;
  - ensuring the improvement of the quality of teachers' marking to better address and improve poor presentation.

[Paragraphs; 2,4,9,17,44,61,71,73,74,75,76,92, 95, 108, 119 and 120.]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	112
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	15	67	30	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	60	27	0	0	0

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

### 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)	26	600
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	46	40	86

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	43	44	44
	Girls	39	39	39
	Total	82	83	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (95)	97 (94)	97 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	44	43
	Girls	39	38	38
	Total	81	82	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	95 (90)	94 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	44	35	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	34	41
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	68	66	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	84 (86)	94 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	35	42
	Girls	32	32	34
	Total	65	67	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (85)	85 (84)	96 (91)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	0	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*



## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	25
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	314

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	1,087,639
Total expenditure	1,086,688
Expenditure per pupil	1,817
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,337
Balance carried forward to next year	20,288

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	651
Number of questionnaires returned	199

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	28	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	40	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	49	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	15	1	5
The teaching is good.	58	38	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	43	16	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	35	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	29	49	16	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	2	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	47	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	32	20	6	18

### Other issues raised by parents

- Parents said they valued the skiing trip but felt that other opportunities for visits were limited. There was general agreement that there is a lack of after school activities for pupils to attend.
- Parents praised the number of visitors to the school, e.g. theatre groups, a farmer and a birds of prey demonstration.
- Parents agree that the school's site managers are excellent and very aware of any security problems.
- Parents praised the 'buddy' system for new pupils.

## **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**

59. The school has improved the quality of provision for children in the nursery and Reception classes, judged to have weaknesses in the last inspection. At that time, there was unsatisfactory teaching, which is now improved. The nursery is a relatively new building with a large outside play area on two sides. There is easy access to this secure outdoor area. There are three Reception classes, which are within the main school building. These classes also have easy access to an outdoor area, but one class has to play in a different place from the other two. The nursery accommodation is very spacious, light, and fairly well equipped, with a wide range of suitable resources. Reception classes are rather small and cloakroom space has been adapted to provide role-play areas. The school has suitable admission arrangements, which help to prepare young children for school. Staff work hard to establish a good relationship with parents, and to involve them in their children's learning. Children join the nursery with some understanding of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Many have the benefit of pre-school education. By the time that they transfer to the Reception classes, children have made good progress in most aspects of their learning. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children reach or exceed the standards expected nationally in all areas of learning and a significant number exceed these standards in personal, social, emotional and creative development.

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

60. Considerable emphasis is placed on the personal, social and emotional development of the children in both the nursery and Reception classes. All the children make good progress in this aspect of their learning, including those with particular learning needs. They know the class routines and rules, such as how many children are allowed into the role-play area. In the Reception classes, the children are learning not to shout out answers. By the time they leave the Reception classes, most achieve standards above those expected for their age. The children achieve well and this is a direct result of the staff's sensitivity to developing children's confidence. Activities are planned to promote children's independence. For instance in the nursery, the staff plan themes such as a 'Pizza Parlour'. The children take turns to be customers or a chef, and there is no evidence of unwillingness to share. In one Reception class, six children busily worked to make model wild animals out of recyclable materials. Once again, they willingly shared resources and helped each other when it was necessary. The teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. As a result, children are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. They are very aware of routines, even in the nursery. They tidy up automatically at the end of lessons, taking great care of equipment. They concentrate for sustained amounts of time, work well together in groups, and try hard to listen to others in class sessions. Children have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Members of staff provide good role models and the staff, including support staff, are good at asking questions and involving themselves with children during activities. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered through stories, discussions and the general ethos of the classes. The children also benefit significantly from attending assemblies which are specially planned for their age group.

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

61. All children, including those with special learning needs, are making suitable progress. This includes children with special learning needs and the very few who are learning English as an additional language. They are likely to achieve the standards expected in all aspects of language and literacy, although higher attainers are insufficiently challenged in writing. Children make very good progress in speaking and communicating and also with reading, but they only make satisfactory progress in writing. They have inconsistent handwriting and letter formation. Teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers in all classes recognise the need to develop speaking and listening skills; opportunities are seldom missed to intervene and question children to promote

their learning. For example, the nursery staff are skilled at developing children's language. They ask questions as they work. For instance, when children played a number game, they were asked 'How many?', 'Who has the most?', 'Which is more than?'. In the Reception classes, elements of the National Literacy Strategy are taught. Nursery staff introduce initial letter sounds. This is extended in the Reception classes through appropriate texts that are chosen for interest and suitability for the age of the children. The children in the nursery identify their name cards, and many attempt to write their name. In the Reception classes, most children can write one or two simple sentences. However, writing activities take place at the same time with every child writing and only two adults available to support. This means that the children who require help with spelling tend to monopolise the teacher's time. For example, following hearing the story of Elmer the Elephant, children were asked to use prepared worksheets with incomplete sentences such as, 'Elmer went ...' 'Elmer saw ...' 'Elmer said ...'. The children set to work and tried hard to complete their work. Despite having suitable support from a teaching assistant, it was impossible to deal with all the requests for help with spellings, so children were advised to draw pictures instead. This resulted in some children spending most of their time drawing, and one example of a completed sentence went unnoticed although it read, 'Elmer went to Elmer'. It was noticeable that higher attainers marked time with more support and guidance they could quite easily have written much more.

62. Children are introduced to books very early. In the nursery, parents share stories with small groups of children, and the staff read stories and rhymes with great expression. Children listen to story tapes and they are eager to look at books. However, book resources are well used and in some cases shabby. From the nursery onwards, children choose books to take home and share with their parents. More able children in the Reception classes are able to read with confidence, and they try to apply their knowledge of initial sounds to unknown words in the text. In all classes, children are very happy to share books with adults and to talk about what they have read.

63. Children who are learning English as an additional language are well supported in both nursery and Reception classes. Teachers ensure that these children are carefully introduced to school routines. Pictures and other visual clues are used to help them understand. Staff plan a range of practical activities to stimulate language development and writing and reading.

## **Mathematical development**

64. The children, including those with special learning needs, make satisfactory progress as a result of the teaching they receive, which is always at least satisfactory and often good. Most children are on target to achieve the early learning goals expected by the end of their time in the Reception classes. From the nursery onwards, children are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical language. They sing number rhymes and play simple mathematical games. For instance in the nursery, they play a game with two dice which determine the number of cards they collect. The member of staff who is supporting them asks questions such as, 'Who has the most cards?' 'Has anyone more than me?' They understand the names of simple shapes, and the main focus of the teaching is developing number recognition. This early work is appropriately developed in the Reception classes, where children identify numbers to 20. Teachers ask appropriate questions such as 'What number comes after 17?' Children carry out simple addition and subtraction tasks. For instance, a member of staff drew an elephant on the board and children were asked questions such as 'If one elephant invited three cousins round, how many would there be?' Work is planned to match the ability of the children in each group. Children explore shapes, and members of staff reinforce this knowledge when the children make models from junk materials. The children correctly identify squares, circles and triangles, cylinders and cubes. They use simple mathematical vocabulary to describe position in relation to other objects. During role-play and other free play activities, staff pose simple mathematical problems. However, during outside play there are limited opportunities to promote mathematical development, for several reasons. The nursery room is very large. There are only two members of staff to supervise up to 26 children. Although the staffing ratio meets requirements, it is quite impossible to supervise activities that take place in the classroom at the same time as children play outside. Consequently, outside activities are

arranged for all children at the same time. The Reception classes have insufficient outside play resources, so often children have to improvise and make up their own imaginative games. A wide range of number activities could be planned within the school's natural environment if these weaknesses were rectified.

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

65. In the nursery, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is being successfully developed through a variety of activities, which draw their attention to the world around them. Teaching is good and, as a result, children are on target to achieve national standards by the end of the Reception classes. The provision is enhanced through visits from people with special interests. For instance, a farmer was able to bring a selection of animals, chickens, ducks and a turkey for children to see. They stroked the chicken's feathers and stroked a lamb. A falconry team brought several birds, including a barn owl. Children wearing falconry gloves were able to observe the birds from first hand. In all classes, the children have regular access to simple tools. They are particularly competent with scissors, gluing and sticking, and their making skills are very advanced. In the nursery they make biscuits and they know the importance of washing their hands. In all classes, children have regular access to a computer. They are confident in using a mouse to draw simple pictures. Teachers support children's work on the computer, and plan for its use to link with class topics when possible. As a result of this teaching, children make good progress.

66. Although the nursery has a large garden with grass area, this is rarely used to extend the children's learning. It provided a good space for the farm animals, but generally children have limited opportunities to look at patterns in the environment, such as the effect of rain on the play equipment. Limited use is made of the area as an outdoor classroom to promote early environmental or scientific learning. Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals for this aspect of the provision by the end of the Reception classes.

### **Physical development**

67. In the nursery, children make satisfactory progress in their physical development during outside play. They learn through being active and interactive with other children. They practise and succeed in filling containers in the water tray. They steer tricycles accurately and have an awareness of space. They balance and climb on the climbing frame and they willingly share and take turns. They enjoy feeling different sensations, such as hanging upside down on the nursery climbing frame. Reception classes have physical education lessons, which include ball skills and running and catching. They make good progress in these lessons. By the time they move to Year 1, they have a good range of physical skills. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good, although no outside lessons were fully observed during the inspection. Reception classes make good use of the school field in summer time. This helps the children to make good progress in their physical development. In the hall, they run freely and develop their balancing skills on a range of equipment. They enjoy the open air and the freedom of large-scale movement. However, there are limited opportunities for Reception class children to explore the use of space with wheeled toys or to use outside climbing frames for balancing. There are very few opportunities to see things from a different perspective, such as from the top of a climbing frame, in a tunnel or below a box. Resources are stored in a garage, which is not easily accessible. The nursery outside play area is difficult to supervise, so children cannot move spontaneously between indoor and outdoor environments. Despite this, most children achieve the early learning goals for physical development.

### **Creative development**

68. Children are on target to exceed the early learning goals for creative development by the end of their time in the Reception class. This reflects the good quality teaching they receive. Children make good progress. Activities provided for the children when they enter the nursery ensure that they receive a wide range of experiences that support the development of their creative

skills. They handle paintbrushes, scissors and glue sticks with confidence and skill. Children using clay were encouraged to explore its texture and to use it to create different animal shapes. This was a new experience for them, and they were surprised to find that the clay dried on their hands. Role-play areas are provided in each class. These are changed regularly in both the nursery and Reception classes to reflect various aspects of life, such as a fish shop or the nursery book bus converted into a rocket. Children enjoy dressing up as other people and, in the nursery, they have lots of opportunities to use their imagination and to pretend. Although Reception classes have role play areas which provide some stimulus for extending their imagination, there are limited opportunities in their outside play. During the inspection, one class was cutting out elephant shapes in the outside play area. The only other activities allowed were road mats and toy cars. These activities did not capture the attention of some higher attaining boys. They decided to make up their own game, and before long they were using the water fountain as a rocket launcher and counting 'four, three, two, one, zero' and squirting the water to indicate the rocket was taking off. Children have opportunities to play percussion instruments and to sing. In their special assemblies, inspectors noticed them singing with enthusiasm.

## ENGLISH

69. Standards overall in English at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above the national average. Attainment has remained above the national average since the last inspection. About half the pupils achieved the higher Level 5 at 11 years of age in 2002 in both reading and writing. Inspection evidence confirms that the standard is likely to be similar or better at the end of the academic year. Standards of work seen in Year 2 and Year 6 were above, and sometimes well above, the national average. There have been some fluctuations in the results of girls and boys in recent years. The school has identified and addressed the issues and, as a consequence, there is now no significant variation in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils have a very good attitude to the subject, and achieve very well.

70. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they achieve according to their capabilities. They make good progress because teachers successfully match tasks to their needs. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language are given appropriate support and specialist support from the local education authority. This ensures they achieve appropriate standards and they make satisfactory progress. Progress made by pupils who are gifted and talented is good.

71. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively implemented across the school in order to raise standards. There has been staff training on all aspects of the literacy hour, and teachers are well informed. There is consistency across the school in the sharing of learning objectives with the pupils, and all teachers use the plenary session effectively so that pupils can demonstrate new learning. Pupils enter the school with average standards and their achievement by the time they leave the school is very good. This is because of the consistently effective teaching.

72. Speaking and listening skills are very good across the school, and pupils are eager to contribute to discussions and do so with enthusiasm. They have a good vocabulary and know how to express their opinions with confidence. Pupils listen attentively at the start of lessons and, as a consequence, they do not need instructions to be repeated. Teachers provide good role models of clear speaking. Additional adults in the classroom support pupils with their speaking skills by encouraging their oral contributions. There were very good examples of planned opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils took turns to talk about a weekend activity and other pupils asked pertinent questions. In a very good Year 5 lesson about formal letter writing, a few pupils read out their completed letters in the plenary session. Other pupils were invited by the teacher to gauge how effectively the objectives of the session had been met. Pupils respectfully evaluated the letters, praising the content and offering suggestions for improvement. In a Year 6 lesson, short periods of teacher input were followed by short periods of 'partner talk' to generate ideas and consolidate learning.

73. Standards in reading are very good across the school. In all classes, pupils have opportunities to read silently, read to an adult and read in a group during guided reading time. Reading records are kept carefully, and parents are very supportive of their children's reading. Many pupils use the public library, and there are weekly school library sessions during which pupils are taught library skills. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught a variety of strategies for working out unknown words and, as a consequence, most pupils have a good repertoire of skills to decipher unfamiliar words. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression. They recount stories, predict endings and enjoy a range of reading matter. In Year 6, very good readers show a clear understanding of significant themes, events and characters, and employ the skills of inference and deduction. They read a wide range of books, can discuss and defend their preference for a favourite author, and also know how to access the Internet to research topics. There has been a stronger emphasis on using non-fiction texts in recent years. Pupils in Year 2 are confident in identifying the main features of non-fiction texts and know about contents, index, glossary and sub-headings. A Year 2 pupil said: 'The glossary tells you the meaning of hard words in the book'. There are additional adults to support less able readers and, as a result, these make good progress.

74. The standard of writing is good throughout the school. There is a breadth of writing opportunities for pupils, and writing across the curriculum is good. Pupils practise different forms of writing such as play scripts, poems, reports, stories, reviews, summaries, notes and letters and are keen to express their ideas. Evaluation of the written work across the school showed that pupils produced a wealth of narrative writing, but that non-narrative writing was less evident. Where non-narrative writing was present it was good. There was a very interesting anthology of poems compiled as part of an information, communication and technology project in Year 2 which showed that pupils were able to use adjectives imaginatively and to good effect. Across the school, a system of 'writing buddies' has been set up whereby pupils act as critical friends for their writing partners. Teachers plan extended writing lessons when pupils have the opportunity to compose longer pieces of work. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. In a Year 6 lesson about explanation texts, the teacher discussed with pupils the need to take into account "personal perspective" when writing, and to incorporate powerful connective phrases to improve their written work. Use of information, communication technology in literacy lessons is satisfactory.

75. The standard of handwriting is inconsistent across the school and varies from class to class and year to year. There are formal handwriting lessons, but skills learnt are not always applied to other contexts. Older pupils do not always join their handwriting, and therefore fluency and speed are affected. When pupils produce final drafts of their work, this is often very well presented. However, daily written work in some classes is untidy, with crossings out and inconsistent use of cursive and print script. At present, there is inconsistency in the teaching of handwriting across the school and the presentation of pupils' work. Spelling is taught in a structured way and most classes use spelling tests with three levels of difficulty. One Year 3 class had a large wall display reminding pupils of the range of spelling strategies they could use to help them to spell accurately.

76. The quality of teaching and learning observed in three quarters of the lessons were good or very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is most effective in Years 2, 5 and 6. It is most effective when there is careful planning, good pace to lessons and a good match of task to pupils' needs. Teachers across the school have very good classroom management skills and, as a consequence, behaviour in English lessons is very good and pupils achieve well. Teachers assess their pupils throughout lessons and give constructive oral feedback. Marking in pupils' books, however, is of varied quality and in some classes there is insufficient guidance about how their work could be improved. There was very good teaching and learning in a Year 2 class where an enthusiastic and inspirational teacher maintained very good pace to keep the pupils' attention during the shared part of the lesson. The pupils then showed sustained concentration as they worked productively at different tasks in four groups. When a group of higher achieving pupils had finished their stories, they took a slip from a challenge box that invited them to 'Add a good adverb' or 'Put in three good adjectives'. As a result, their writing improved. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of them. Work is well matched to pupils'

abilities, and support staff are very effectively deployed in English lessons. One learning support assistant teaches groups of gifted and talented pupils throughout the school and works within classes with small groups of pupils to extend their skills. Consequently these pupils have work more closely matched to their needs and make good progress.

77. As a result of the good English teaching, pupils' learning is good. Teachers use a very good variety of teaching methods and teaching styles to ensure that pupils can learn effectively. This ensures no pupils miss out. Those who are learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties attain according to their capability.

78. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to act out familiar short stories in groups prior to their writing activity, and several learning styles were catered for. This kinaesthetic approach to learning, listening, acting, writing – was an inclusive one as all the pupils had a part to play. One Year 1 pupil said proudly: 'My part is really important because I'm the plughole'. The school places a high priority on the teaching of basic skills from an early age, and this enables them to access other areas of the curriculum, with a positive impact on their learning. Pupils have good knowledge of what is expected of them, and know when they have achieved well.

79. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good though the use of this assessment data to guide curricular planning is being developed and is at present satisfactory. There are adequate school libraries for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 -6. The school improvement plan has identified the libraries as areas for further development. The Year 1 and 2 library now has more non-fiction texts than previously and some delightful story sacks for traditional tales. The library which is used by the oldest classes has a satisfactory stock of books covering a range of subjects. Parents run this library well on a rota basis. Class libraries are also being improved following audits of resources across the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were above the national average and have been so consistently since the last inspection in 1997. However, when compared with similar schools, these results are average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level is greater than that found nationally. Over time, there has been little differences in the achievements of boys and girls although last year boys did significantly better than girls.

81. At the end of Year 6, the results in the national tests were above average when compared with all schools but only average when compared with similar schools. Over time, girls have achieved slightly better than boys but this varies from year to year. However, since the last inspection, the school's results have been consistently above the national average although the gap is now narrowing. The school's good achievements in mathematics are largely owing to consistently good teaching and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

82. Inspection evidence shows that the standard of work attained at the end of Year 2 for pupils aged seven is also above the national average. A significant number of pupils are working at the higher Level 3. These seven-year old pupils show good understanding of place value up to 1000 and have a good recall of addition and number facts to 20. Many can add and subtract numbers with two digits mentally and can use written methods for problems with three digits. The majority of the other pupils in this year group can use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and can order numbers and recognise place value up to 100. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to recall pairs of numbers that make 20 and round up or down to the nearest 10. In another lesson, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the multiples of 5 and could identify and recall facts of the 5 times table. Most seven year old pupils can use the correct mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes. They can also recognise right angles and describe them correctly. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge and experience of data handling. For example, pupils have constructed a range of charts and diagrams including pictograms, bar charts, Carol and Venn diagrams. They are able to interpret information from these charts and apply this when solving mathematical problems. The school has



emphasised the need for pupils to use and apply mathematics. Consequently, pupils are becoming familiar with finding different ways to solve simple problems. Most can explain why an answer is correct.

83. Pupils aged 11 in Year 6 also use and apply mathematics very well. Most are clearly developing their own strategies solving of problems. Higher attaining pupils are quick to estimate and predict approximate answers; they can also give rational explanations for their reasoning. They use and apply these strategies well in the mental and oral sessions and the beginning of mathematics lessons. In one Year 6 lesson, the mental starter required pupils to add three and four digit numbers. Pupils not only got the correct answers but were encouraged by the teacher to explain how they achieved this. All but a few pupils are achieving the expected standard in mathematics and nearly half are achieving higher than this. They have a good understanding of place value to 1000 and can multiply and divide whole numbers well. They can add and subtract decimals to three places. They use calculators well to solve problems and check their answers. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of fractions and can calculate fractional and percentage parts of quantities and measurements. Many are familiar with ratio and proportion and can apply these concepts well.

84. The school has identified 12 gifted and talented Year 6 pupils in mathematics. These pupils are benefiting from specialist teaching in a small group. The attainment of these pupils is exceptional and many are achieving well beyond what would normally be expected of them. For example, these pupils have a good knowledge of simultaneous equations and can represent these on a graph. They use and apply mathematics very well and can analyse, predict and estimate when solving mathematical problems.

85. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in mathematics. Teachers are skilled at providing work for them that matches their abilities and, as result, their achievements are often good. The very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported. They attain average standards and make satisfactory progress. Both these sets of pupils are well supported in the classroom. Learning support assistants often give them good support and help them understand and achieve throughout the lesson.

86. Given that the majority of pupils enter the school with average standards, pupils' achievements are good. This is largely owing to the consistently effective teaching that takes place throughout the school. In addition, the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has ensured that all teachers know how to teach mathematical concepts. By applying the strategy, teachers ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding progressively build up over time. As each year group plans together, there is a good level of consistency of approach in the school. This, together with the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy's planning, ensures that pupils' learning is progressive and good.

87. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the use of information and communication technology during mathematics' lessons. There are some good examples of the use of data handling programs throughout the school. In one Year 4 lesson for example, pupils used a computer program to practice recall of number bonds and number pairs.

88. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when the quality of teaching was found to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is effective throughout the school and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In over two thirds of lessons seen, teaching was good and, on one occasion, it was very good. This consistently good teaching is impacting well on pupils' learning, which as a result, is good in the majority of lessons.

89. Teachers' training in, and their experience of, the National Numeracy Strategy have ensured that their subject knowledge is always satisfactory and often good. This enables them to challenge pupils and present them with tasks that meet their needs and improve their learning. Teachers plan jointly across the year groups. In using planning guidance from the National

Numeracy Strategy, they ensure an equality of opportunity for all pupils. Planning is always at least satisfactory. Nearly all mathematics sessions commence with teachers sharing lesson objectives with pupils. They frequently tell pupils what they will be learning, and very often come back to these objectives at the end of the lesson.

90. All teachers are good at teaching basic skills. These are invariably revised and recalled during the mental and oral starter to the lesson. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils' abilities. Consequently, they always set work for them that not only meets their needs but at the same time challenges them and develops their learning. Teachers often use a variety of teaching methods in a lesson to ensure that pupils' individual learning styles are met. For example, during the mental starter pupils often record their answers on a white board, which they then show to the teacher. This also encourages a good level of pupil participation. Teachers use a range of resources in lessons. This promotes the learning of all pupils and helps them complete often quite challenging tasks. The management of pupils is always satisfactory, and often good and very good. Teachers' enthusiasm for mathematics is relayed to pupils. This results in a rapid pace to many lessons during which pupils' progress is often good.

91. In the very best lessons, teachers use different levels of questions for different pupil groups. Mathematical vocabulary is displayed and shared; there is rapid and interesting whole class teaching, and the subsequent activities are challenging for all pupils. Many teachers have developed good practices in the plenary session at the end of the lesson. For example, in one Year 4 lesson not only did the teacher revisit the learning objectives to assess what pupils had learnt but new concepts that extended pupils' learning further were introduced. In the occasional less successful lesson, the pace sometimes slowed and the teacher spent too much time revisiting concepts that the pupils did not use during the main activities.

92. Whilst on-going assessment in lessons is generally good, there is variability in the quality of teachers' marking. Teachers always correct pupils' work, but there is a lack of consistency in the marking. Pupils do not always understand what they need to do to improve. In addition, teachers have not always insisted on high standards of presentation. Consequently, pupils' work can sometimes look untidy. For example, not all pupils use rulers correctly. They have a tendency to draw lines by hand and this means they are often not straight.

93. Whilst standards in mathematics have remained the same since the last inspection, there have been substantial improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the school. This good teaching enables pupils to experience good gains in their learning overall.

## **SCIENCE**

94. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 national tests taken in 2002 was above the national average, with boys and girls performing equally well. The school does well at supporting as many pupils as possible to attain the expected Level 4. When compared with results achieved by pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' attainment matches national expectations. In the same year, teachers' assessments for Year 2 were broadly in line with national expectations for all pupils, and above average for higher attainers. The current inspection finds that, overall, standards throughout the school have been sustained and are more consistent with pupils attaining in line with the levels expected nationally. Overall, the quality of provision in science is good. The standards were good in the last inspection but pupils' attainment in investigative science was the weakest area and below expectations. Pupils now have a confident understanding of how to plan a fair test and they make realistic predictions about their investigations.

95. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. All pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress. In Year 2 for example, pupils undertook a class survey as part of a study of healthy lifestyles and recorded their results accurately in a frequency chart. Pupils wrote clearly about the effects of exercise on their bodies, and used good scientific vocabulary to describe changes in heart rate, breathing and body temperature. Teachers make sure that pupils understand how to ensure that a test in science is fair and reliable. Year 2 pupils learnt how to use

identification keys to sort a range of living things and to classify different materials by their physical properties. On occasions, teachers' marking was very effective in broadening pupils' thinking skills and helping them to extend their investigation further. For example, in a study of heating materials and recording changes, a teacher wrote 'Why did the ice cube melt more quickly when put in a certain place?' In one lesson observed in Year 2, pupils undertook a study of habitats around the school where they observed the presence of mini-beasts in two locations – the school pond and under logs, stones and slabs. Excellent planning by the teacher ensured that all pupils gained considerably from the investigation, and their level of interest and enthusiasm mirrored that of the teacher and the well deployed learning assistants. The teacher encouraged good observation in small groups, and 'writing buddies' supported pupils with special educational needs. All pupils talked confidently about their findings and demonstrated good levels of self-reliance and independence.

96. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with particularly good teaching observed in Years 3,4 and 5. In Year 6, pupils investigate a range of topics and show good progress in identifying flowers by their physical characteristics and in the use of identifying keys to investigate the differences between vertebrates and invertebrates. In all lessons, the learning objectives are shared with pupils who show a good understanding of the purpose and aims of the activities presented to them. Year 6 pupils confidently write about the phases of the moon and can describe the earth's rotation in relation to night and day. They are less confident in explaining why these patterns occur, however. Pupils effectively record results of investigations in a variety of ways, and can draw simple conclusions from the data. In an experiment to assess the effect of the size of container on a candle's burning time, pupils accurately plotted the results. However, they did not consider the reasons why some candles burned for longer than others. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils investigated the conditions necessary for seeds to germinate successfully. The teacher's high-order questioning challenged pupils who responded well by suggesting a variety of hypotheses for testing a range of environmental conditions. Furthermore, as the pupils progressed through their investigations, they adapted their hypotheses as new ideas or information came to the fore. The very good teaching directly impacted on pupils' progress, and they learned considerably from the investigation. Pupils of all abilities were able to identify the factors needed to ensure the test was fair, and they made clear judgements about how to adjust variables when appropriate. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils designed an investigation to separate a mixture of solids. The teacher structured the lesson well, and asked a range of open-ended questions to engage and extend pupils that impacted positively on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. As the pupils prepared their investigations, the teacher supported individuals and groups well and, by so doing, was able to assess their understanding as the lesson progressed. The quality of teaching and learning was less strong when the pace of the lessons was slow and when the level of challenge was insufficient to stretch higher attaining pupils.

97. Teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves, and pupils write well about their findings. However, pupils' written explanations of their investigations are often limited to describing the outcomes. Planning of lessons should be improved to provide more opportunity and time to allow pupils to consider more closely reasons why particular results occurred. In addition, pupils' understanding will be further enhanced if pupils are encouraged to draw conclusions consistent with the evidence and to evaluate their own work, explaining to others what happened and how they could improve their methods. This will enhance the learning of all pupils, and particularly that of higher attainers. In addition, teachers' marking was often limited and lacking in developmental feedback which would extend pupils' learning and support them in identifying ways to improve further. Some good practice was evident in Years 2, 3 and 4, and this should be shared with all colleagues so that provision for all pupils is of the same high quality.

98. The school has endeavoured to raise the profile of science within and beyond the school through running a Science Week for all pupils and linking Year 6 studies to a three day Science Fair at a local grammar school. Information communication technology resources have been extended in recent times, for example with temperature sensors being used in Year 5 in their studies of evaporation and condensation; and computer microscopes being used in a range of lessons.

99. The subject is well led and managed. Strategies are in place to continue to raise standards for all pupils. By adopting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) study units, more effective guidance and support have been available to non-specialists, and greater consistency in teaching and learning is evident. With the use of improved assessment procedures, more accurate tracking of pupils' progress has been possible, providing opportunities for teachers to support pupils who are performing below expectation and in stretching more able pupils. In addition, assessment activities have assisted in the identification of specific training needs, and the coordinator has initiated additional support to the teaching team accordingly. The coordinator has clear and well-considered plans for further improvement in the provision for science, and has set an appropriate and challenging agenda for the future.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with some above average work in drawing and painting. In the last inspection, the standards were very similar by the end of Years 2 but, by Year 6, pupils had higher standards in art. The reason that the older pupils attain lower standards is due to lack of time. More time is allocated to English and mathematics which means less time is available for art.

101. In classes where teachers have confidence, high expectations and a good understanding of the subject, pupils achieve well. Teaching across the school is good with some examples of very good teaching. Pupils are given opportunities to paint and draw what they see and imagine, using a range of materials. They are taught to practise and refine specific skills, with their teachers modelling these skills very effectively. In a Year 2 class, you could hear a pin drop as every child watched their teacher demonstrate the difference between soft and hard drawing pencils. A consistent strength in the teaching is good management of resources and time. For example, a Year 5 class completed their task in a 30-minute lesson because they worked at a good pace and materials were near at hand.

102. Assessment within the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has produced a long-term assessment sheet based upon the QCA scheme of work to help her track the progress of pupils. There are some very good examples of pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning. In a Year 5 class, the expected criteria to be used for making a container were displayed and the teacher regularly stopped the pupils to remind them to check whether they were meeting the criteria or not. At the end of the lesson, the pupils had to decide which containers were stable and best met the aims of the lesson. This effectively linked work to design and technology. Also, there are some very good examples of pupils' written evaluations in Year 6, where the pupils use their classmates' comments to decide how they modify and improve their work.

103. Pupils enjoy their art lessons, and are prepared to discuss their own work as well as make comments on the work of others. In a Year 5 lesson, one pupil overcame a technical difficulty making his container and then went to help someone with the same problem.

104. There were several examples of art being linked to other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils were designing hats to be worn at the 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party', that they had studied in drama.

105. The school has recently spent a considerable amount of money on improving resources. It now has a kiln to support pottery and ceramic work, digital cameras and new software for the computer suite. It is too soon to see the impact of this investment on standards but cameras were used effectively in the Year 2 lessons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106. Standards of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations for the pupils' ages. At the previous inspection, standards were also in line, so this represents satisfactory progress.

107. As this subject takes place alternately with art and design, teaching was only seen in some year groups during the inspection. The analysis of work shows that, overall, pupils have satisfactory knowledge, understanding and skills and make appropriate progress across the school. This includes those pupils who have special educational needs. By the end of Year 2, pupils have appropriate levels of practical skills when using scissors and glue and materials, such as cloth, paper, card and wood. They design simple clothes. In one project, they had designed and made a coat to go with the story of Joseph's coat of many colours. They had also constructed good models of wells, together with winding mechanisms. In one class, a lifelike model of Battersea Power Station had been created to go with a geography project.

108. In Year 3, pupils design, make and evaluate models they of monsters with a pneumatic mechanism. In Year 4 they were learning about a range of stitches they use to make purses, and they check which is the strongest. Pupils in Year 5 make working toys with cams. By the end of Year 6, pupils design and construct good quality slippers. They previously made finger puppets to look at the problems of joining the materials. They drew on this experience to help them. They considered for whom their slippers would be made, and they created an appropriate design plan using labels. Although these were detailed and they gave pupils a good basis for making the final product, the diagrams were sometimes untidy.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, which underpins sound planning. Tasks are presented in a challenging way, but with methods that make learning fun. Relationships with pupils are particularly strong, and classroom assistants and parents are used effectively to help pupils with their work. Displays of work, photographs and models completed indicate coverage of all aspects of design and technology. Display is used to support and celebrate learning and achievement. Aspects of the subject are also used in other curriculum areas. In history, pupils had made models of Roman and Celtic houses. In information and communication technology they were designing playgrounds and bedrooms.

110. All year groups enjoy design and technology and work hard at the subject. They work on projects from investigating to planning; making and evaluating. This helps them to understand, to build confidence and to transfer knowledge from one situation to another. They cooperate well with each other and share ideas willingly. Behaviour in all the lessons seen was good or very good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with levels expected nationally. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection. Lessons were observed in Years 1, 2, 4 and 5, and supporting evidence of standards was taken from a scrutiny of pupils' work across all year groups, from perusal of displays around the school and from discussions with pupils and staff.

112. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of their locality and ask and answer sensible questions about places using their own observations. They show a good grasp of map skills, drawing routes around the school grounds. They identify the constituent countries of the British Isles and most of the neighbouring European countries. They make comparisons between life on an island and life in Bexley. In doing so, they express themselves clearly about their preferences for living in a particular locality. Pupils are able to make simple judgements about the quality of their school environment and describe how recent changes have been beneficial to the school community. For example, pupils, in describing the installation of the new quiet area in the playground, explained how it had improved the aesthetic look of the playground, as well as how it had created a special place for quiet thinking and reflection.

113. By Year 6, pupils confidently identify the major European countries and can talk confidently about world geography. Year 6 pupils, in a visit to the River Shuttle and as part of a study of the water cycle, collected a range of data including river channel depths, river speed and variations in the water's temperature at various locations. They recorded their results in a variety of effective ways, and described their activities clearly and concisely. In Year 4, pupils studied settlements and explored their history through a study of place names. They examined the factors that influence the location of different settlements and, through a class discussion, recorded their ideas in a survey grid that identified the most important factors in choosing a place to settle. Pupils have used the Internet to research routes to school and have drawn simple home to school route maps. Pupils use grid references accurately to locate specific features on a range of maps, and can relate outline map features to those on an aerial photograph of the Bexley area. Some effective map work was seen in a history activity where pupils examined the growth of Bexley through the years 1840 to the late 1890's. This way of reinforcing geography in other subjects strengthens pupils' understanding of their locality and the area's past growth as a settlement. Year 5 pupils have also undertaken a traffic survey in the Bexley area to draw conclusions about the traffic congestion in the locality.

114. The overall quality of teaching and learning observed is good. In a good Year 5 lesson for example, pupils were studying the similarities between Bexley and Llandudno. The teacher planned the lesson well and incorporated an extension activity that required pupils to apply high-order thinking skills. The lesson was well resourced with plans from a birds' eye view and three-dimensional maps of the Llandudno area. Pupils showed confidence in identifying common features between their hometown and Llandudno. They made good observations about the towns' various features, but were less confident in explaining how the landscape affected the growth of the two towns. Pupils were then asked to 'hot seat' a telephone conversation in pairs as though they were seated in Bexley and Llandudno. The pupils had to apply what they had learned from the lesson in order to describe the relative merits of living in Bexley or Llandudno.

115. During the inspection, pupils were given limited opportunity to develop greater independence as learners. In addition, teachers' marking does not provide pupils with feedback that will help them to improve. Some good practice takes place, for example in a Year 4 exercise book the teacher wrote 'Why would people come to your design of town?' The pupil provided a written response that demonstrated good reasoning and evaluation skills.

116. A range of visits in the locality complements pupils' classroom experiences and allows them to apply their skills in a range of different localities, ranging from the school grounds, local rivers, village studies and the Year 6 visit to an outdoor education centre where orienteering and other fieldwork is undertaken.

## **HISTORY**

117. Although it was not possible to observe lessons in history across the school, lessons were observed in Years 1, 3 and 6. So, in order to make judgements about attainment and progress, additional evidence was obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, a study of displays around the school, an analysis of curriculum planning and discussions with pupils and staff. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations.

118. By Year 2, pupils have a reasonable understanding of chronology, and can place a sequence of events in order, for example, they completed a time line covering part of the Egyptian period and, similarly, in Roman times. They make sensible comparisons between events of the past and those of the present day. For example, pupils compare a Second World War menu during rationing to their own daily menu of today. Pupils can investigate a range of sources to make judgements about people in history and past events, including writing about the experiences of Anne Frank and describing how they would feel in the same situation. Pupils in Year 1 can talk confidently about recent times, and can place past family members on a simple time line. With some help, they can place a number of photographs from different periods of recent history into a semblance of chronological order, though they cannot confidently identify the clues in the

photographs that would assist them in placing the photographs more accurately.

119. By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of chronology, and can sequence major historical periods accurately. Year 6 pupils, in a study of conditions in cotton mills in Victorian times, ably described the conditions experienced by factory children and devised good questionnaires as though they were interviewing children of the time. They extended this further by writing a script with the Victorian children's replies. Some of the pupils' ideas demonstrated empathy and good understanding of the conditions of the time. A good range of primary and secondary sources are used to enhance learning, but these are not effectively used to extend pupils' skills of evaluation and interpretation. For example, in studying the growth of Bexley during the Victorian period, pupils accessed maps of c.1840, 1860 and 1897, and they also studied the Bexley Street Directory c.1886 that provided an insight into the trades and commercial activities of the period. Pupils described the main changes observed, but did not explore in sufficient detail why those changes took place. To achieve higher standards, pupils need to learn to analyse events and situations and provide reasons for why these events or changes took place. This area of the history curriculum requires further development.

120. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where teaching was good, the lesson was well planned, the teacher used challenging questions to test and extend pupils' understanding, and pupils raised their own questions about the historical evidence presented to them. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were investigating historical artefacts and their significance in telling us about the past. Pupils were asked to bring in historical artefacts that had personal significance, and to give a brief presentation about them providing information about their origins, their provenance, their value and their links with the past. A range of artefacts was brought in, including ration books, medals, military uniforms, coins, memorabilia from the Home Guard, an early mobile phone and the jawbone of a coyote. During the presentation, pupils listened carefully and asked a range of interesting questions about the artefacts. The pupils displayed genuine interest and awe as the artefacts were revealed to them. The pupils' replies to the questions from the class were well informed, confident and well expressed. Pupils then chose an individual object that had particularly interested them, and recorded significant details from closer observation and their recollections from the presentation. Progress in the lesson was good because, through good questioning and focused study, pupils learned how to select and link information from a variety of sources and begin to evaluate their significance. One pupil, at the end of the lesson, commented 'I really like history.'

121. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is often limited to ticks and brief comments of little value in moving pupils on. For example, a pupil's extended study of a historical character, Queen Victoria, was extensively researched on the Internet and a range of information and excellent images were downloaded. The teacher's marking focused mainly on the 'beautiful pictures', and no substantive comments about the content and the quality of research were evident. More developmental marking could have included advice on how to edit the information, how to use the sources to answer more specific historical questions, and how to improve the research further. A priority for the future will be to improve teachers' marking and planning, in order to develop pupils' interrogation of historical sources and thus allow them to make judgements about the reliability of a range of sources and how events in history are open to different interpretations.

122. The subject is well resourced, and pupils have increasing access to a range of primary and secondary sources. In addition, the school's improved computer facilities are being tapped to allow pupils access to the multitude of sources on the World Wide Web. A number of educational visits are arranged so that learning opportunities are further enhanced. These include visits to the school by theatre groups with re-enactments of historical times, a visit by the World War Two History Bus, a visit to a historical house to learn about Elizabethan and Victorian times, and visits to an art gallery.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

123. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology are in line

with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, they are above national expectations. At the time of the last inspection, they were below average, so the school has made very good progress in this area. By Year 2, pupils write and correct short passages using a word processor. They control a small robot to travel round a course by programming a set of instructions. By Year 6, they can use a spreadsheet to work out a set of accounts for a tuck shop and draw graphs. One child had used the Internet to research work on Queen Victoria, and had produced a project of very high quality. Pupils can create newspapers including text and pictures. They use the interactive whiteboard in the computer suite for their work, and show confidence when using the computers. The computer suite is used effectively to develop skills in the subject and also to enhance learning in other subjects, including literacy and numeracy. A full range of the programme of study was seen during the inspection. One recent successful innovation, to resource each classroom with laptop computers and an interactive whiteboard, is gradually being incorporated into teaching. This is already having a positive impact on attainment.

124. In all lessons, teaching was good and frequently very good. The teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Their planning is appropriate, and the work fits with the needs of the class. Teachers are confident in using a range of applications. When pupils are working on the computers, the teachers monitor and support them well. Classroom assistants are used effectively to help pupils with special educational needs.

125. The good quality of teaching ensures pupils' learn well. The teachers combine the use of the computer suite and in the classrooms to provide pupils with many opportunities to develop and to practise their skills. The pupils have no anxieties about using the technology; they log on and access work done previously. Pupils in Year 2 were learning to program a small robot. In Year 5, pupils used the computer to design playgrounds and in Year 6, pupils learned to control a set of lights that they could switch on and off from the computer. One child designed a program so that when a toy car drove up the drive of the model house, the garage door opened. Pupils with special educational needs learn at the same rate as others in the class.

126. Attitudes to the use of information and communication technology were generally good. Behaviour was good or better in most of the lessons seen: pupils sustain concentration, listen to their teachers and get on with their work. They obviously enjoy opportunities to use the technology and get great benefit from it. They work well in pairs or small groups when asked to; they share ideas and help each other.

127. The school effectively covers all aspects of the subject. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support other areas of the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

128. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards in music that are in line with the national expectations for their age group. This judgement is the same as in the last inspection. The school has an imaginative approach to teaching music, and the learning opportunities are successfully enhanced through the school orchestra, Year 3 and Year 4 recorder groups and the school choir. The standards in singing are very good. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully, confidently and sweetly with obvious enthusiasm. This is very evident in music lessons and assemblies. Pupils' performances are much appreciated by parents and the wider community. They enjoy participating in local musical performances. Throughout the school, pupils are given suitable opportunities to learn new skills or improve on those they have already. For example in a good lesson in Year 5, pupils practised drumming skills. The teacher demonstrated the different sounds made by open and closed hands beating a drum to a rhythm. Pupils worked in pairs to practise 6- or 8-beat time cycles. The teacher successfully reinforced their learning by reminding them that should they wish to change the dynamics, it would be necessary to hit the drum harder. Pupils made good progress, and several groups worked out quite complicated sequences of drumming. Listening to and appraising music by a range of composers from around the world is another aspect of the curriculum that is enhanced in assemblies as well as class lessons. For instance, some teachers start their lessons by playing recorded music and asking pupils how it



made them feel. .

129. By the end of Year 2, pupils accompany songs successfully using untuned percussion instruments. They understand that music can be used to tell a story or create a mood. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1, pupils adapted percussion sounds to illustrate the teachers' story telling. One boy carefully and imaginatively scraped a drumstick over the face of the drum, to make a quiet snoring sound. Pupils often have very good attitudes and, in one lesson for the three classes in Year 4, they were excellent. In this lesson, pupils sang with secure pitch and good control of dynamics. Their teachers led the lesson by each of them singing alone to provide an example for the pupils. This was particularly important when they introduced a Jamaican song with words in a Caribbean dialect. By the end of Year 6, pupils successfully compose sounds to create imagery. A very good example was a lesson in Year 6 where the teacher introduced the lesson with Vivaldi's 'Winter'. The class discussed the way the composer had effectively created sounds that depicted cold weather conditions. They were asked to make up their own sequence of sounds to depict a scene. One imaginative group planned the noises of traffic with a bee flying through it. Pupils behave well, and they willingly contribute their own ideas or suggestions to lessons.

130. The quality of the teaching is good, and two lessons were very good. Teachers use their imagination to make their lessons interesting. A good example of this was a successful lesson based on a topic on playground songs. The pupils demonstrated several games that they play to select someone to be the chaser. The teacher showed them video clips of other children singing as they played or skipped. The pupils were enthralled and interested to note similar singing games in a Caribbean culture. Teachers plan their lessons carefully; they sometimes use commercial schemes to provide a structure to their lessons. Class management is usually good and teachers seem to enjoy teaching this subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. The last inspection judged pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 to be much the same but the standards of older pupils were good. The school's emphasis on raising standards in English and mathematics has meant there is less time available for physical education. Timetable limitations during the inspection meant it was not possible to gather enough evidence to report fully on all aspects of this subject. Evidence gathered on gymnastics, dance and games indicate that standards are typical of those found in most schools. High quality additional activities after school make a significant contribution to the attainment of pupils who participate. There are good opportunities to develop ball skills and teamwork through group coaching and competitions with other schools.

132. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good. Teachers manage their classes well, and relationships are good. Behaviour is very good, during both indoor and outdoor sessions. Generally, pupils respond quickly to instructions and the pace of lessons is good. Teachers, as well as their pupils, wear appropriate clothing. Lessons are well planned and take into account the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Good support from classroom assistants, and the teachers' effective class organisation ensures the majority of pupils take part in the lessons. Pupils are often grouped together by mixed ability and this works well. The more able pupil encourages the less able pupil to become more confident and to improve their physical skills.

133. Lessons are carefully planned, and learning aims are shared with the pupils. Teachers emphasise the need to work safely. They ensure pupils warm up at the start of lessons. When handling equipment such as benches and mats, there is strong emphasis on correct techniques. There is a good pace of work and good use of praise to reinforce learning. Teachers use their enthusiasm to good effect to develop skills. Dance is given priority in Years 1 and 2, and gymnastics and games are emphasised in Year 6. The good quality of the teaching means that pupils are enthusiastic for the subject and learn effectively.

134. The curriculum makes good provision for all aspects of physical education including, a residential visit to the Bowles Outdoor Education Centre for pupils in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 have

swimming lessons, but this was not observed during the inspection. There are also opportunities to go skiing, to learn gymnastics at a local club and to enjoy Tag Rugby. The subject is appropriately resourced with outdoor facilities and equipment. The generous grounds provide well for games teaching. The range of indoor equipment is appropriate.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. At the time of the last inspection too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on teaching, but this time eight lessons were observed across the full age range of the school and teaching was seen to be effective. Pupils' in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 attain in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

136. Three lessons were seen in religious education with pupils up to the age of seven, where the teaching seen varied from satisfactory to very good. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan appropriate activities and manage pupils and the resources well. Where teaching was most effective the teacher used a variety of methods to interest the class. Pupils are often given opportunities to discuss their feelings and ideas with a partner. This approach meant pupils were enthusiastic and fully involved in the lesson. Five lessons were seen with pupils up to eleven years old. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall, with one lesson being judged good. The best teaching happened when pupils were encouraged to expand on their ideas prompted by questioning from the teacher. For example in a Year 5 lesson, a pupil explained that 'dark can be frightening and light represents Jesus who can comfort you and make you safe'.

137. Learning was good for pupils up to the age of seven, not only in the lessons seen but also from evidence based on work in books. These pupils knew that Jesus told stories, as a way of teaching people about God. For example, they recognised that the Prodigal Son was about forgiveness. They also knew, from studying other religions, the meaning of words like 'Mandir', 'Shabbat' and 'Passover'. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good knowledge of the Bible, and they understood the key ideas of Christianity like 'Bread of Life' and 'Light of the World'. In discussion, they could only make limited comparisons between religions because some of their understanding about religions other than Christianity, was inaccurate. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, made the same progress as others in the class.

138. The pupils' attitude to their work was good. Discussion with pupils showed they could talk with interest about the work completed. During a lesson in Year 4, the teacher had photocopied information about a Sikh wedding that some pupils had brought in as part of their homework. All the pupils used this information to enhance their knowledge of the Sikh religion. In a Year 1 lesson, the pupils enjoyed a pop-up book about the creation, and they were inspired to make their own collage of this event. On the few occasions that pupils began to lose interest, it was because activities went on for too long.

139. The range of resources, such as objects and pictures, is good. The teachers make good use of the local churches and their Chaplains to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding from first hand experience. Also during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 were seen making good use of software on a laptop to help them understand what happens in a baptism.