

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHEARS GREEN INFANT SCHOOL**

Northfleet, Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118265

Headteacher: Mrs S Walker

Reporting inspector: Graham Bate  
20926

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 247858

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Packham Road Northfleet Gravesend Kent
Postcode:	DA11 7JF
Telephone number:	01474 566700
Fax number:	01474 566700
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Walsh
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20926	Mr G Bate	Registered inspector	Science Art and design English as an additional language Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
15181	Ms M Hackney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21858	Revd J Pryor	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education Educational inclusion, including race equality	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
26292	Mrs H Mundy	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited  
National Westminster Bank Chambers  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset  
TA8 1AN

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

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

# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the riverside town of Gravesend in north-west Kent. It serves an area of mixed housing, a significant proportion of which is former local authority property. The school caters for pupils from the ages of four to seven years. Most pupils attend from the immediate surrounding area. There are 250 pupils on roll, which is about the national average size for a primary school and there are more boys than girls. There are currently 40 children in the two reception classes. They will be joined by a further 60 next January. A stable local community supports the school and pupil mobility is low. The birthrate in the area is falling and the number of pupils on roll has slowly declined over recent years. The pupils' standard of attainment on entry covers a broad range but, overall, is below average, particularly in communication skills. About 14 per cent of pupils, at this early stage of the school year, have been identified as having special educational needs. This is below the national average but is expected to rise. Two of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. About ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average. Almost all the pupils are of white ethnic origin but about five per cent are of black and Asian heritage. There are five pupils who speak English as an additional language. Only two of these pupils have extra help as they are at an early stage of learning English. A significant proportion of teachers is fairly new to the school, including the headteacher who had been in post about four weeks at the time of the inspection.

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

This is an effective school. The pupils achieve well as a result of the overall good quality of teaching. A significant contributor to the pupils' learning and achievement are also the very good behaviour and relationships and the positive attitudes that are evident throughout the school. The broad curriculum stimulates and motivates the pupils' learning in a variety of ways. The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils and has developed a particularly strong partnership with the parents providing them with good quality information about their children's progress and the curriculum. The new headteacher has a very clear idea of the developments the school needs to undertake and is keenly supported by all the staff and governing body. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Attainment in English is good and literacy skills are taught well.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and the teachers are committed to improvement.
- The quality of relationships is very good throughout the school, as is the pupils' behaviour.
- Very good provision is made for the pupils' social and moral development.
- The pupils are looked after very well and good provision is made for those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- There is a very strong sense of partnership between the school and parents.
- Very good leadership is provided by the headteacher who has a very clear idea of the direction the school needs to travel.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching numeracy skills and the expectations for higher attaining pupils.
- The management of curriculum and pupils' recreational time.
- The whole-school approach to the planning of the curriculum linked to the development of the role of subject managers.
- The systematic checking of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.
- The governing body's monitoring of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The targets set for pupils' learning.
- The quality of educational play activities in each year group.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. It was found to have a number of strengths and was a school which created an environment where the pupils were happy, felt safe and secure and made progress in their knowledge and understanding. Over the last four years the school has kept pace with the national improvements in standards in reading, writing and mathematics; in reading and writing the overall trend has exceeded the national picture. The overall good quality of teaching has been maintained and the majority of the action points from the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. More opportunities are now provided for independent writing, classroom management in Year 2 is good, and attainment in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education and design and technology has risen to satisfactory levels. The provision made for the pupils' spiritual development is now good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	A	B	B
Writing	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	C	C	D	D

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

The standard of attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range but generally is below average. The results in the National Curriculum tests, taken in May 2002, show that standards in reading were above average, in writing average, and below average in mathematics when compared with all and similar schools. This represents a fall in performance in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in relation to the standards on entry to the school, this shows good achievement in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics, especially as the 2002 cohort had a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards of work during the inspection indicate that attainment is at least satisfactory for seven-year-olds in all subjects and there is good achievement, given the pupils' capabilities. Standards in art are above expected levels. Children in the reception classes are below expected levels in all areas of their learning but they are beginning to make progress, especially in physical and creative development. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do those with English as an additional language. This is a measure of the good support they receive. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. There was no sign of oppressive behaviour in the playground. They are very welcoming to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are always very pleased to undertake responsibilities. There is mutual respect throughout the school resulting in very good and positive relationships.
Attendance	Good. It is monitored well. Punctuality is also good.

The behaviour of the pupils and the high quality of relationships reflect the high expectations all staff

have for these areas of the pupils' development.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. The large majority of it ranges from very good to satisfactory; only a very small amount is unsatisfactory. As a result of the good teaching the pupils achieve well. The teachers are at their consistent best teaching literacy, mainly as a result of good planning and a determination to raise standards. The teaching of mathematics, whilst being overall satisfactory, has not been given the additional support as English has enjoyed. Planning in mathematics does not always meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are higher attainers for whom expectations are not yet high enough. The same is true in other subjects. The basic skills in other subjects are taught well. The management of the pupils is consistently good and the teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the presentation of work. The teachers work extremely well with the effective teaching assistants. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by a lack of focus to the pupils' learning, insufficient challenge and poor use of time. The teachers know their pupils well, relationships are very good and day-to-day assessment, such as marking, is very effective. The teachers make good use of homework, which is predominantly reading and spelling. The mainly positive aspects of the teaching ensure that learning is good in the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum, in both reception and in Years 1 and 2, is broad. It is enriched by visits and visitors to the school. The management of curriculum time requires evaluation. The planning of educational play within the curriculum requires review.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and managed well. The pupils make good progress as they are supported well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school works hard to ensure the pupils have good access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is good. More opportunities than before have been provided for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes exceptionally good care of the pupils' welfare. The teachers know their pupils very well.
How well the school works with parents	There is a very positive partnership between the school and the parents. The school is open to discussion with parents about any aspect of their children's development. Parents work very closely with the school about tasks the pupils are asked to undertake at home.

There are good links with the local community.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a very good leader. She has quickly established good relationships and has a very clear agenda for change and development. She is being supported enthusiastically by all the staff and the governing body.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has only been established in the last two years, with a significant proportion joining only in the last six months. They are very clearly committed to the school's welfare but are only just beginning to establish a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Clear and effective analyses have been undertaken, particularly of standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Evaluation of the school development plan has been carried out regularly. The monitoring of teaching is not yet effective.
The strategic use of resources	The financial resources available to the school have been deployed well. The principles of best value are just beginning to be applied.

There is a strong team spirit and commitment to the school and its pupils from all the staff whatever their role. The teaching assistants make an effective and efficient contribution to the pupils' progress. A programme for their training has already been set up. The administrative and cleaning staff are also very efficient and effective. The hatted accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## 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>• Children like coming to school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel well informed about progress.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable and work closely with us.</li> <li>• The children work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Amount of homework about right.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prohibition on running in the playground.</li> <li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Security of premises.</li> <li>• Information on children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse the positive views of the parents. There has been a recent change in policy about running. The school buildings are secure. It would appear difficult to make the grounds totally secure but the staff are always vigilant. The provision of extra-curricular activities is under review. The quality of reports to parents is good and, exceptionally, there is a fortnightly opportunity to discuss progress with class teachers. Parents are also welcome to make an appointment to visit the school at any time.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The performance of seven-year-olds (Year 2) in the May 2002 National Curriculum tests, based on the average points scored by all pupils, is above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, that is those with 8-20 per cent of pupils deemed eligible for free school meals, standards are the same in all three areas of learning. This represents a fall in performance from the position in 2001. The 2002 cohort of pupils had a significantly higher proportion with special educational needs; about 25 per cent, which is approximately ten per cent more than the average. Up until 2002, the trend in the three areas of learning had been up since 1998, broadly in line with the national pattern in mathematics, and better in the other two areas, especially reading.
2. Although there is a wide variation, the standard of attainment on entry to the school is generally below average. This has been the case for a number of years. Attainment on entry is particularly weak in communication skills. The above analyses of performance in the national tests indicate that the pupils usually achieve well.
3. Inspection evidence confirms that the standards of work in English are above average, and are average in mathematics and science. This, too, indicates that the pupils are continuing to achieve well and overall make good progress. The standards of work produced by those pupils who have special educational needs show that they make good progress and achieve well in the light of their previous attainment. In most classes the effective and unobtrusive support they receive enables them to work successfully alongside the other pupils in the class. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. They learn quickly and well and, in many subjects, are achieving standards of attainment which are equal and in some cases better than those of the other members of the class.
4. Children in the reception classes progress well in physical development and are on course to exceed the national early learning goals in this area. They are likely to achieve the goals in personal, social and emotional development and creative development. The children are friendly, polite and confident and have some awareness of the needs of self-care. However, they are not yet on course to achieve the national early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and knowledge and understanding of the world development. They could achieve more if they were provided with more challenging teaching and more purposeful play activities.
5. Pupils achieve well in English in Years 1 and 2 and overall standards are above average, maintaining the position in the last report. There have been improvements in the pupils' writing skills, for example in their free writing, and in written work in other subjects, such as religious education. Particularly good progress is made in the pupils' speaking and listening skills, entering the school as they do from a low base. Reading is of a good standard and all pupils have a good grasp of phonics, which helps them to make rapid progress. This is largely due to the good, well-informed teaching they receive.
6. Although pupils make good progress in their mathematical understanding, standards are just average. This has been the pattern over a number of years with performance never matching the standards attained in reading and writing. It partially reflects the lower level of additional support it has proved possible to provide compared with that for literacy.

7. Standards are average in science. The pupils achieve well, particularly in investigative work, owing to their ability to co-operate and collaborate effectively. Standards in science are also greatly helped by the literacy skills of the pupils and their ability to record observations effectively.
8. There has been an improvement in standards in religious education since the last inspection. The pupils' achievements, in those parts of ICT they have undertaken, are now good and standards are satisfactory and this is mainly as a result of the teachers' improved confidence and competence in the subject. This, too, is an improvement since the last inspection.
9. Standards in design and technology are at least satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils now have a good understanding of the design process as a result of improved planning. In art and design, standards are good. The teachers have a good understanding of the subject. In history, geography, music and physical education, the pupils attain standards that are expected of seven-year-olds nationally.

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

10. Pupils in all classes, including those who are new to reception, have a good attitude towards school. They are proud of their school and are eager to talk about their successes and involvement in activities. Parents agree unanimously that their children like school and settle quickly into new routines. Pupils are friendly and polite and they are careful to look after resources and the accommodation. The school is a happy, very caring and orderly environment where pupils of all levels of attainment are keen to learn and take an active part. Most are confident to engage in conversation with visitors and to answer questions during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are equally interested and enthusiastic due to the good quality support they receive. Pupils respond well to all adults in the school who act as good role models. There have been no exclusions during the last year.
11. Throughout the school pupils know their classroom rules well, and they understand the need for rules to create a happy environment. For example, during a Year 2 religious education lesson pupils likened the Ten Commandments to their own classroom rules. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of self-discipline and this makes a strong contribution to their progress and achievements. During lessons, and even when tasks are insufficiently challenging for the more able, most pupils concentrate well on their work. They try hard to do their best and to please their teachers. When given the opportunity many pupils are able to work well independently, and they are confident and sensible whilst moving around the school.
12. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They respond well to the positive ethos and the consistent system of reward for academic and personal achievements. Pupils have a clear sense of the difference between right and wrong. During assemblies pupils listen very attentively, and they enter and leave the hall quietly to walk sensibly back to their classrooms. In the play hall, when pupils sit in very cramped conditions to eat their midday meal, they continue to behave very well. Very good behaviour was observed in the playground with pupils playing very well together. Through the school's provision for social development, pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. The majority of pupils have good personal and social skills because these are very effectively developed from an early age. No evidence was seen during the inspection of bullying or harassment, and parents are very happy that any inappropriate behaviour is quickly nipped in the bud.
13. Relationships throughout the school are very good. In all classes pupils have a warm and happy relationship with their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are caring and supportive of each other during lessons and outside in the playground. Pupils with

special educational needs work well alongside other pupils in lessons and most participate fully in mixed ability group work. The very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, makes a strong contribution to personal and academic progress.

14. In all classes pupils are keen to help and, when given the opportunity, complete their tasks willingly and with confidence. Planned opportunities for personal initiative and independence are sometimes limited by the firm structure of behaviour management, but pupils enjoy taking turns to deliver registers to the office, collecting milk cartons and delivering messages. Some pupils help by feeding the birds and watering plants and they value the trust and responsibility placed upon them. In some lessons insufficient opportunity is provided for pupils to make independent choices and to select their own materials. Pupils respond well to the good range of visits to places of educational and cultural interest, and they gain a sound knowledge and understanding of their local cultural heritage.
15. Attendance is good and is above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and they are keen to come to school. Registration starts on time, and there is an efficient and orderly start to the day with pupils in all classes settling down quickly into well-established routines. This has a very positive effect on pupils' attitude towards school and on their achievements and progress.

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

16. The quality of teaching is good and shows a similar overall pattern to that at the time of the last inspection. There has been a fall in the number of unsatisfactory lessons from six per cent to four per cent, and a similarly small fall in the percentage of lessons that were at least good, from 54 per cent to 51 per cent. The most significant improvement has been in Year 2 where eleven per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory previously. There were none during this inspection.
17. In the reception classes, the quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory. A quarter of the lessons were good and only one was unsatisfactory. The teachers' behaviour management is very good; they enjoy teaching and have very good relationships with the children. Whilst planning is satisfactory overall, for play it is unsatisfactory, as teachers do not set out clearly their learning objectives or systematically use it to reinforce learning in areas other than personal, social and emotional development. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by loss of time and under-preparation.
18. As a result of the well managed programme of support for pupils with special educational needs they make good progress and achieve well. The teachers make use of their individual education plans in preparing work for them; the teaching assistants use this planning effectively to achieve these good results. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language do so successfully. The specialist support they receive ensures this good progress. A good feature of this is the linking of social development with the acquisition of English. This allows the pupils to become integrated into the school community quickly. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support those pupils with special educational needs as well as those learning English as an additional language. They, and the teachers, share information about the pupils to good effect.
19. The teachers and the teaching assistants very clearly enjoy their work. As a result, very good relationships have been established with the pupils. The pupils unfailingly respond positively in all lessons. These positive attributes, coupled with the good classroom management skills of the teachers and their high expectations for behaviour, result in effective learning throughout the school. The teachers make strenuous and successful

efforts to ensure all pupils feel included in all aspects of work, whether it is during question and answer sessions or making sure the physically wary are supported well in physical education in order that they might gain in confidence.

20. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. It is good in some subjects, for example English and art and design. Since the last report the teachers' confidence and knowledge and understanding have improved through the provision of suitable training, in ICT, religious education and design and technology. This has contributed to the improvement in standards in these subjects since the last inspection.
21. The teachers' planning is fully, collaboratively and regularly done in year teams. This is followed up by regular evaluations, which are noted by the year managers for amendments, if necessary, to future curriculum plans. This is good and effective practice. The quality of the planning varies from subject to subject. It is at its best in English where learning objectives are clearly stated and work is identified and planned for all levels of attainment. On occasions, the planned learning objectives in other subjects are too general to aid the planning of work at different levels, for example in mathematics. Despite the identification of learning objectives, they are rarely shared with the pupils by writing them on the board, even at the child friendly level of WILF (what I'm looking for). This reduces the teachers' ability to reinforce learning during plenary sessions by clear re-examination of the stated objectives. Additionally, as curriculum time is sometimes limited by the current 'domestic arrangements' procedures, consolidation sessions at the end of lessons are occasionally rushed reducing the quality of learning.
22. The teachers' expectations for the challenge to pupils' thinking is not high enough, especially for higher attaining pupils who, as a consequence, sometimes finish tasks quickly and move onto unrelated or unchallenging tasks. Higher attaining pupils are not frequently challenged, for example in history and geography, to develop research skills by using reference books and other sources of information. The teachers usually have high expectations for the extension of pupils' technical vocabulary. This was evident, for example, in science. Most of the pupils' work is well presented as a result of the teachers' emphasis and the pupils' pride and pleasure in their work.
23. The basic skills of literacy are taught well. The teachers are using, and appropriately amending, the national strategies well. The quality of relationships allows for easy exchange of ideas and views between the teachers and pupils. As a result, from a low base, the pupils make good progress in communication skills becoming, by Year 2, generally articulate and increasingly confident. The teachers have a good understanding of the teaching of reading and work well with the teaching assistants to establish the effective use of phonic skills. The writing skills established in literacy lessons are enhanced well by the teachers in other subjects. For example, in science and the humanities, pupils are expected to record their observations and thoughts using their own words, and not by using innumerable assignment sheets. Handwriting is taught well.
24. The teaching of basic skills in mathematics is satisfactory. The pace of the introductory mental sessions is sometimes too slow to challenge the thinking of pupils, especially those who are higher attainers. The teachers' planning in mathematics is also satisfactory. However, it lacks the flexibility for teachers within the year groups to vary the objectives according to the needs of their classes. Pupils find it difficult to assess their own progress, as their targets or group objectives are not always made clear to them. Insufficient opportunities are provided by the teachers in mathematics for pupils, especially the higher retainers, to attempt open-ended problem solving activities that challenge their mathematical thinking. In other subjects, basic skills are generally taught well. For example, in science, the systematic approach to investigation, basic operational skills in ICT, an appreciation of the passage of time in history and the

concept of design as a process in design and technology. This lays good foundations for the pupils' future learning.

25. In the pupils' work seen during the inspection, the marking by the teachers was generally good. It was supported and, in the best, indicated how the work may be improved or set targets. This quality of marking is of great help to the pupils' learning, particularly when it is coupled with the teachers' good knowledge of their pupils. Good assessments are made, frequently during opening question and answer sessions, of the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teachers also make effective assessments of progress during the concluding and consolidation sessions at the end of lessons; they are less effective when the time management of the teachers allows insufficient time for a productive, short concluding session. As the pupils' interest and concentration is generally good, and little time is lost to the maintenance of discipline, most lessons make effective use of the time available. However, curriculum time is frequently cut short by various domestic matters, such as drinks and toilets. Accumulatively, this detracts from the efficient use of time and the pupils' learning.
26. The teachers and the teaching assistants work well as a team. There are examples of good practice where the teaching assistants have their own copies of lesson planning which helps to ensure they are clear about the focus for learning. The teaching assistants enjoy good relationships with the pupils and greatly assist learning. They also assist in the maintenance of homework/reading diaries, in order that tasks undertaken at home are beneficial to the pupils' learning.

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

27. The school provides a broadly based curriculum in which all the subjects required by the National Curriculum in Curriculum 2000 are present. The curriculum is enriched through occasional French lessons, visits from musicians and other artists, as well as the visits the pupils make to places of educational or inspirational value, such as Horton Kirby Horticultural Centre. All those areas of the curriculum, ICT, religious education and design and technology, which were found to be wanting in the previous inspection report, are now covered satisfactorily.
28. The school plans its work well using the National Literacy Strategy suggestions for English, and national guidance for mathematics and the other subjects. Religious education, which is now satisfactory, is based effectively on the Kent Agreed Syllabus. In this way all the statutory requirements are clearly met. The curriculum for the children under five years of age is soundly based on the nationally recommended early learning goals. The medium and short-term planning for lessons is done in year groups and is detailed and thorough, although some of the objectives for learning are too general. However, there is less continuity of development between years in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school is aware of the need to develop continuity of teaching and assessment between the years and to this end the extension of the role of subject managers to bring this about is being actively pursued by the new headteacher.
29. The curriculum is enriched by the two computer clubs planned especially for those without access to a computer at home. There is also a sound range of visits and visitors which add significantly to the pupils' experience. These cover music and art, as well as social matters, such as visits from the fire brigade, and the local and railway police. The school has recently made links with a local supermarket and has gained the support of The Prince's Trust to help with a decoration of a hall. There is a group of parents who provide good support in school.

30. Relationships with other schools are satisfactory and improving. There are good relations with the nursery school on the site, and these are to be further developed along with the appointment of an early years manager. Relationships with the junior school are being built up. Pupils from the junior school are being trained to help occasionally with playtime and games as a means of broadening the younger pupils' experience. The school prides itself on being a community school which lives up to its name.
31. The school works very hard to ensure equality of opportunity of both girls and boys and for all ability groups, The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The teaching assistants are well supported and provide a good service ensuring that the pupils they look after make good progress and achieve well, given their previous attainment. Good use is made of the part-time specialist co-ordinator who supports the staff in producing clear individual education plans for those pupils needing them. The school has devised an extra category to the national scheme for special educational needs, that of 'class action', to identify pupils who may need extra help. This is resulting in earlier identification of needs and is a good initiative.
32. Good and sensitive provision is made for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They learn quickly and soon become well integrated into the school community, greatly helped by the positive initiatives to ensure parents are as fully as possible aware of the curriculum needs of their children. This is clearly an inclusive school.
33. The school has adopted the National Literacy Strategy for the teaching of English. It has gone further by adapting the strategy from time to time to meet its particular needs. Apart from the split lessons caused by the pattern of the school day, where the pace of the learning is lowered, the methods used in teaching English are effective. Good use is made of literacy skills in the work produced for other subjects, such as history or religious education. Books related to these other subjects also figure in literacy lessons promoting raised standards in both.
34. While the school has utilised the national numeracy initiative to teach mathematics, less attention has been paid to that than to literacy in the past. As a result the use of numeracy in other subjects is less prominent and standards in the subject are lower than those in English.
35. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory. The school's policy for PSHE and citizenship is good and provides teachers with clear guidelines. This area of learning is often informal within the curriculum, such as through science and English, and the school has recognised the need for a more formal and planned approach. At present there is very little dedicated provision on the timetable for PSHE.
36. Overall the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Since the last inspection the school has improved its provision for spiritual and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the world around them and to appreciate the beauty of nature and the changing colours of the seasons. An example was seen in a music workshop of pupils' wonder at the sounds they were able to achieve through a range of wind instruments. During a Year 2 history lesson pupils shared their feelings well when considering the uncertainty of the future. In assemblies, which are often very imaginative, pupils reflect on aspects of their own lives and their relationships with others. Many pupils have a sense of wellbeing when they sing well-known songs with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils showed an appreciation of poetry when they celebrated National Poetry Day and took part in class presentations of poems about special occasions during the year.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school promotes a clear



moral code for behaviour and respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. All adults in the school listen carefully to what pupils have to say, and as a result pupils also listen well to others. Pupils of all ages have a very good appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and this is reflected in their behaviour. Very good use is made of stories to highlight important moral issues and opportunities that arise during the day are used well to reinforce the school's expectations and to encourage pupils to consider the needs of others. Pupils regularly support a number of national and local charities, such as collecting items for the Gravesend hostel for the homeless.

38. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school is a very inclusive community where every individual is made to feel valued. Pupils of all ages make a good contribution towards school life and take an active role in ensuring that the school functions as an orderly environment. Arrangements at lunchtime have improved and pupils now sit at tables in family groups to eat packed and cooked meals. Although conditions are very cramped, pupils behave very well and interact sensibly with each other in a social environment. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups during lessons such as art and design, history, physical education and ICT. This contributes very positively to their social development and learning to share resources as a group. In the playground pupils play together very well and enjoy each other's company. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to help and to take on special responsibility during the school day.
39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to gain an insight into their own culture through a range of music, stories, paintings and artefacts. Regular visitors into school such as musicians, theatre groups and puppeteers enrich the curriculum and pupils' cultural development. Experience of other cultures is provided, for example, by undertaking painting in the style of the Chinese. Pupils go out on a range of visits to places of educational and cultural interest. For example, they visit Horton Kirby Environmental Education Centre, the Astrodome, Godstone Farm and nearby Botany Bay. With the support of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), all pupils have visited the theatre to see Peter Pan in pantomime. The provision for multicultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures during religious education and geography lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 are currently studying aspects of Judaism and they enjoyed experiencing a Jewish celebration meal. The school has recently acquired a small number of books and artefacts to support the teaching of religious education and multicultural awareness.

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

40. Since the last inspection the school has continued to provide a safe and very caring environment for all pupils. The provision for pupils' welfare and pastoral care is very good and parents agree that their children are well looked after in school. Although pupils are safe and well supervised in the playground by lunchtime supervisors, limited evidence was observed of supervisors initiating purposeful activities and encouraging pupils to be involved. All staff know the pupils well and they are alert to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress and achievements. The good support that pupils with special educational needs receive from all staff enables them to take full advantage of all educational opportunities. The very small numbers of pupils with English as an additional language are included well with the support of the language teacher assigned to them. Satisfactory induction procedures ensure that children and their parents understand how the school is organised and this helps children to settle quickly into the established routines. The school has recognised the need for closer liaison with the adjacent pre-school group to share information about progress and additional needs as part of its induction process. Pupils in Year 2 are well supported during their transition into Year 3. Pupils visit the junior school and are partnered with a 'buddy' to ensure they settle quickly into the new

school.

41. The procedures to monitor health and safety are very good. A risk assessment is completed each term by an outside agency for the whole site with a report for the headteacher and governors. At present governors are insufficiently involved in the regular monitoring and checking that issues are dealt with promptly. The caretaker is committed to completing a range of small maintenance tasks around the school, and is vigilant in checking for safety issues. During lessons and in the playground staff ensure that pupils are made aware of safe practices. Electrical equipment is checked regularly, and regular fire drills ensure that all concerned know how to evacuate the building in an emergency. The provision for first aid is good with several qualified first aiders on site. Parents are contacted where necessary and accidents are well recorded.
42. The school follows very good procedures for child protection. The headteacher has overall responsibility, and all concerns are well monitored and recorded. The co-ordinator for special educational needs actively supports the headteacher in this area of welfare, and both work closely together to ensure pupils' safety and access to outside agencies. The secretary is efficient in keeping good up-to-date personal and medical records for all pupils and these are used well to support their personal needs.
43. Good procedures are followed for monitoring and promoting attendance. Registers are completed accurately and consistently. Any unauthorised absence is followed up promptly. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and are consistently implemented throughout the school. There is a very positive system of reward and celebration and a range of stickers and gold award certificates for good work and behaviour successfully raise pupils' self-esteem. The procedures to monitor and eliminate bullying or harassment are very good, and any incidents are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Satisfactory procedures are followed for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, and staff know pupils well. There is no established whole-school system to record pupils' personal development. Class teachers operate their own recording systems of personal achievements and progress on an informal basis.
44. The school's arrangements for assessing the pupils' academic achievements are good overall. The pattern of assessments provides ample information for the teachers to make good quality judgements about the standards being achieved within each year group. The programmes of assessment cover the core subjects of English and mathematics thoroughly. In other subjects assessment is at a very early stage of development.
45. Each year group has its own well-planned and managed pattern of assessment. The assessments are full and informative, for example there is an evaluation of the pupils' performance on entry to the school and of pupils' writing development during Year 1. The assessments in Year 2, which include a close analysis of the National Curriculum Standard Tests (SATs), provide a better means of ensuring that the performance of pupils is judged more closely against national standards. The results obtained by each pupil in both years are recorded, and examples of work are kept, in cumulative files for each. This wealth of information is carefully managed, but it is not currently used to provide detailed targets for individuals or small groups of pupils. The targets that are produced look to year-end achievements, rather than small-scale improvements by weeks, months or terms, of which the pupils can be made aware and towards which they have an incentive to work. This is a necessary development of which the school is aware and for which plans to improve the situation are in hand. There is a very informative summary sheet about each pupil with personal details included.
46. The good quality assessment information gathered in each year group is used to guide

future planning, but there is a weakness in the continuity of development of subjects, apart from literacy and to a lesser extent numeracy, throughout the school. The very recent development of the roles of subject managers is designed to make good this deficit, and in some cases, such as, for example, ICT and science there is a clearer view of the subject's development throughout the school. The development of planning using targets detailing what the pupils should learn has recently been introduced in Year 2 with a view to linking assessment and planning together more effectively.

47. The assessment and support of pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The individual plans for these pupils' education are well produced and built up of appropriately small units of development. The parents and carers of the pupils involved are consulted effectively. The result of this high quality provision is that the pupils make good progress and achieve well. In the attempts at earlier identification the school goes beyond the statutory requirements. Funds are used appropriately and well.

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

48. The school has a very good and fruitful relationship with parents, and this has been well maintained since the last inspection. Although the headteacher has been in post for a very short time she has already built up a very good relationship with parents who are genuinely welcomed into school. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and their children's progress. The majority of parents feel that the school works closely with them and they are comfortable to ask questions and to discuss any concerns. The headteacher and staff are readily available to speak to parents at the start and end of the day and this regular contact is valuable in ensuring that minor matters are quickly dealt with. Most parents provide quality support at home by listening to reading and helping with homework topics. This additional support has a very positive impact on the pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. All parents have supported the school by signing the home/school agreement. The school is currently seeking parents' permission for pupils to access the Internet.
49. All pupils have a home/school reading diary which is taken home with reading books, and many parents use these regularly as a means of communication with teachers. The school values the regular assistance in classrooms of a significant number of parents who help with activities such as reading, ICT, cookery and art and crafts. A small group of parents organise the well established weekly book club and many pupils take the opportunity to save up to buy books of their choice. Many more parents help when pupils go out on visits. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about progress and are provided with a copy of their children's individual education plan. They are invited to attend all review and assessment meetings and most parents are interested and support their children well. The PTA is an active group of parents who organise regular social events and raise considerable funds for the school. Activities are well supported and enable the PTA to provide a range of additional learning resources, such as computers, gymnastic equipment, and the upgrading of the play garden.
50. The quality of information for parents is good and has been well maintained and improved since the last inspection. 'Meet the teacher' sessions are held in September and consultation evenings in the autumn, spring and summer terms. Parents are also invited to look at their own children's work and speak with teachers on designated Wednesday afternoons during the term, which are scheduled about once per fortnight. These are all very well attended, and during the inspection many parents were seen in school looking at work and speaking to teachers. Parents receive regular newsletters and communications which provide a good amount of information about organisation and special events. In addition class teachers provide a very clear outline of the topics to be covered in the curriculum each term to assist parents in helping their children at home. A school information trolley is located in the foyer and parents are invited to look

at a variety of documentation including the school's curriculum policies.

51. Reports to parents are good overall and cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. The reports have improved and contain helpful and personalised information about what pupils have learnt and their response. Reports include appropriate targets, which provide clear guidelines about areas for improvement. However, there are a few inconsistencies between classes in the quality and amount of clear information about progress across the curriculum.

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

52. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The recently appointed headteacher is an influential leader, with a clear educational philosophy. She is enthusiastically supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, who share her commitment to provide all pupils with a wide range of opportunities for academic achievement and personal development. Very good relationships throughout the school are based on mutual respect and close links with the community and have built up over a number of years.
53. The headteacher's initial plan for school development identifies numerous areas for improvement, including the current structure for free play activities. Already she has motivated the staff to implement a programme of rapid change but is building on the established strengths of the school. She is very good at delegating responsibilities, and staff value the many opportunities now available for broadening their experiences. Teamwork is well developed in the school, and the easy, mutually supportive relationships of teachers, teaching assistants, governors and parents have a significant effect upon pupils' attitudes and attainment.
54. The roles of subject managers have changed since the headteacher's appointment. However, not all managers yet have adequate subject knowledge. The focus of development has rightly been to improve staff knowledge and understanding by asking questions and listening to the answers. She is aware that some subjects have not been adequately developed, and that weaknesses in mathematics require early attention. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator, who is not employed full time, maintains a good overview of provision and outcomes.
55. The headteacher is aware that provision is sometimes unsatisfactory for the highest attaining pupils in mathematics. Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and for the small number with English as an additional language. Special educational needs are identified in the reception classes, and the targets for the pupils are regularly reviewed by class teachers in consultation with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Progress made by pupils from ethnic minority groups is monitored regularly.
56. Governors are very hardworking, and are fully committed to the school. However, the governing body has some vacancies, committee structures are not established and areas of responsibility are not clearly defined. Governors are not linked to curriculum subjects, to year groups or classes. They seek to contribute to the school development plan and to give good support to the headteacher and staff. They are adequately informed about the school's strengths, but are less secure when assessing weaknesses. They acknowledge the deficiencies in current procedures for monitoring the day-to-day work of the school.
57. Although procedures for monitoring pupils' work are improving rapidly, analysis of performance data is not yet fully used to identify strengths and weaknesses in mathematics. The mathematics targets set for whole-school improvement are not

adapted for individuals or groups of pupils. The school's monitoring has recently identified some underachievement by higher attaining pupils.

58. Procedures for appraisal and performance management are good, and are improving. The headteacher proposes to begin a detailed programme of monitoring classroom teaching in all subjects, and provide teachers with written feedback to help their development and improve the quality and consistency of teaching. However, programmes for the induction and training of staff new to the school require improvement.
59. The school's short-term financial planning is good, and longer-term developments are costed. A significant budget underspend is appropriately attributable to planned expenditure on new classrooms. Expenditure is now governed by best value principles, and spending outcomes will be evaluated against costs and standards at similar schools. All co-ordinators have been allocated funds for resource improvements, but their proposals for future expenditure will be supported by detailed bids. Good systems are established for checking and collating purchases, and paying creditors. The headteacher confirms that numerous amendments have been implemented to financial procedures, following a recent local authority review. The governors do not have a satisfactory overview of the budgeting process, and do not yet systematically review areas of expenditure. In the light of the unit costs per pupil, the effectiveness of the school and the context within which it works, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
60. The headteacher and governors make good use of available funds to employ enough teachers and an adequate number of teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school, however, does not have a pianist on the staff, restricting some performance opportunities. Teaching assistants are conscientious and enthusiastic. A training programme is now established for them. They provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils.
61. Administrative routines are good, and the school office functions smoothly. The school's administrator ensures that updated financial information is available to the headteacher and to governors. Specific grants are properly allocated. The funds provided for the support of pupils with special educational needs are well used. The employment of a part-time teacher with a special concern the pupils with special educational needs to support the staff in providing for these pupils is an effective use of resources. The school's use of new technology is satisfactory.
62. The accommodation is satisfactory although the hatted classrooms are in a poor state of repair. The access requires close monitoring to ensure pupils' safety when entering and leaving via the uneven steps and surfaces. The main building is very clean and well maintained through the commitment of the caretaker and cleaning staff. Since the last inspection toilet facilities for pupils have been improved. Throughout the school colourful and attractive displays of pupils' work, pictures and artefacts create a very stimulating and interesting learning environment. The school makes good use of all available space. The very large hall is well used for physical education and assemblies. The play hall is used regularly by the youngest children for play activities, and for dining at lunchtime, although space is rather cramped. Classrooms and central areas are of sufficient size to accommodate the number of pupils on roll. The separate ICT suite is good and well equipped. The library is very small and provides insufficient space for groups of pupils to browse and look at books. The current accommodation for the special educational needs co-ordinator is inadequate, since it is in essence a broad and frequently-used corridor. It is anticipated that current building plans will include more suitable accommodation. The outside hard play area is just satisfactory, and the school benefits from the good provision of a sports field. The recent development of a play garden and environmental area with a pond provides a good learning resource for

science and geography topics. The dedicated secure play area for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage is good and provides sufficient space for them.

63. Learning resources to support the teaching of all subjects of the curriculum are at least satisfactory. Resources for design and technology have improved since the last inspection. The school has recently purchased additional reading books, and a range of resources to support the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Resources are used effectively and are generally easily accessible to staff and pupils.

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

64. The governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school by:
  - providing subject co-ordination training for the new managers;
  - providing additional numeracy strategy training for all teachers and teaching assistants;
  - incorporating work to meet the needs of all pupils into teachers' planning.(Paras: 1, 6, 24, 34, 46, 54, 55, 57, 67, 76, 77, 89-95)
- (2) Ensure that subject managers (a) consider the curriculum planning needs of the whole school and (b) that targets in their subject for pupils' learning are more closely related to groups or individual's needs.  
(Paras: 17, 24, 28, 45, 46, 57, 85, 94, 112, 116, 147)
- (3) Establish a systematic framework for the regular monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning.  
(Paras: 58, 123)

- (4) Improve the quality of play activities in each year group, including the Foundation Stage by:
- calculating the amount of curriculum time allocated to play, and monitoring learning outcomes in addition to those for social development;
  - ensuring that all play is purposeful, and is planned with clear objectives linked to current or new learning;
  - challenging pupils with a wide range of play activities, such as role-play, narrative play and investigative play;
  - resourcing play areas to meet all planned objectives.
- (Paras: 4, 17, 53, 70, 71, 75, 79)
- (5) Improve the management and use of curriculum time and pupils' recreational time.
- (Paras: 17, 21, 25, 53, 73, 86, 103, 136)
- (6) Consider developing a strategic approach to the governing body's monitoring of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- (Paras: 56, 60)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
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	4	20	21	2	0	0
Percentage	0	9	42	45	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### 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
	2001	61	60	121

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	59	59	60
	Girls	57	57	56
	Total	116	116	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	96 (96)	96 (97)
	National	84 (830)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	60	60	58
	Girls	58	57	55
	Total	118	117	113
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (96)	97 (93)	93 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	194	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	7	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	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26.8

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	274

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	685,718
Total expenditure	688,778
Expenditure per pupil	2,120
Balance brought forward from previous year	50,305
Balance carried forward to next year	47,245

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

250

Number of questionnaires returned

64

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	20	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	34	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	37	2	2	2
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	31	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	6	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	34	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	27	11	5	30

## **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**

65. Evidence from baseline assessment of the previous two years' intakes of children indicates that attainment on entry is usually slightly below the level expected nationally. Discussion with children currently in the reception classes, and evidence of their early written work, indicates that their attainment was below average when they started school. Attainment was particularly low in communication, language and literacy.
66. The school does not have a nursery unit, and does not yet have a manager for the Foundation Stage. The recently appointed headteacher is establishing good links with an on-site community pre-school. Most children from the pre-school transfer to the school. The remainder of each year's intake is drawn from a number of settings. Consequently, children begin the reception year with a variety of pre-school experiences. Children enter the reception year in the term of their fifth birthday. Currently, 40 children are in two classes. Eight children have special educational needs. No children speak English as an additional language.
67. Attainment is below average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment is average in creative development and above average in physical development.
68. Most children in the reception classes are likely to exceed the early learning goals in physical development, and to achieve the goals in personal, social and emotional development and in creative development. They appear unlikely to achieve the goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.
69. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The previous inspection report judged provision to be good, but direct comparisons are impossible because of many changes to the national structure for Foundation Stage education.

### **Teaching**

70. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. In the satisfactory lessons, some work is unchallenging, and play is not always linked closely enough to the early learning goals. Where the teaching was good, for example, the teacher has good understanding of the literacy hour, and good strategies for teaching phonics. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, much time is lost because the lesson was under-prepared. In all lessons, teaching assistants make good contributions to children's attainment and progress. Teachers' behaviour management is very good, and all staff have satisfactory knowledge of the development of young children. However, their knowledge of the early learning goals is unsatisfactory overall. Staff have not recently been trained, and are not fully aware of current good practice. All staff are very keen to learn. They enjoy teaching, and are receptive to fresh ideas. Planning is satisfactory overall, but it does not show how higher attaining children are to be challenged. Planning for play is consistently unsatisfactory because teachers do not clarify their learning objectives, and do not systematically use play to reinforce learning. Too much curriculum time is allocated to free play and, additionally, some other activities degenerate into free play.

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

71. The programme for personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory, and most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. Teachers establish good routines to enable all children to settle quickly and accept the absence of their parents and carers. All children are polite, friendly and confident. Their concentration is good, and they maintain passive interest in the activities prepared for them. However, the option of 'free play' during structured group teaching sessions allows children outside the group to spend significant time on activities without learning purpose. For example, in a satisfactory creative development lesson, where the teaching assistant worked in sequence with small groups on a specific activity, a group of boys chose to manoeuvre model cars on a play mat. The class teacher briefly observed this extended activity, and groups similarly engaged. She occasionally intervened, but did not guide or monitor the activities.
72. Consistent praise from all staff develops children's self-esteem. They share resources, take turns, and are very civil to each other. Their relationships with adults are very good. Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is always good, and often very good.
73. Children have some awareness of self-care, for example they know that overalls must be worn to protect their clothes during painting activities. Most children can put on their outdoor coats unaided, and manipulate zip fasteners. The procedure for children using the toilets is unsatisfactory. At set times, all children are taken from their classroom to a corridor adjacent to the toilet area. Children not wanting to use the toilet wait patiently until the class reassembles for the next activity. Each repetition of this sequence reduces lesson time by about ten minutes.

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

74. The programme for communication, language and literacy is satisfactory, and a few children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. On children's entry to the reception classes, their speaking and listening skills are below average for their age. Children of average attainment have poor understanding of the rules of grammar, and are rarely corrected. For example, during the inspection, a child said 'I cutted it out'. The error was not pointed out. Children have limited vocabularies, and few speak in full sentences. Teachers accept brief responses, and do not phrase questions to encourage extended answers. During the inspection, no child was invited to talk to the class about work in progress or work completed, and many opportunities were missed for children to plan collaboratively in construction activities.
75. Children listen attentively to stories and instructions, but do not always retain what they hear. They recognise some initial sounds of words. In a good literacy session seen, the teacher explained how pages are turned in books right to left, and words read sequentially from left to right. Children were invited to show toys brought from home, beginning with the letter 'P'. The class quickly recognised a toy dog as a 'puppy'. In this lesson, two teaching assistants provided good support for children of all attainments. All children know that pictures tell stories. They recognise favourite books, and are beginning to understand that print conveys meaning. Children of all levels of attainment recall some features of familiar stories. A few higher attaining children can recognise some words by sight, and recognise their own names. All children are encouraged to take home their reading books to share with their parents or carers. Writing areas in the Foundation Stage are unrelated to children's experiences. For example, areas do not resemble shops or the post office, and do not contribute to imaginative play. Children of average attainment can write some recognisable letters of the alphabet. They are encouraged to form letters correctly in their workbooks, but not always when writing informally. For example, they write their names on paintings in a random mix of upper and lower-case letters, and are rarely corrected.

## **Mathematical development**

76. A few children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. A few higher attaining children count accurately to 15. Most can recognise some numbers to ten, but some write reversed. During the inspection, both classes sang a good repertoire of number rhymes, but the teachers did not ask them to accompany the songs with actions demonstrating their understanding. Many opportunities are missed to plan development of the children's mathematical skills during non-mathematical activities. For example, they do not count the number of children present during registration, or lining up for the toilet. During the inspection, children were not seen to use counting games, such as ludo, dominoes and snakes and ladders.
77. All children have satisfactory mathematical language. They understand the meaning of 'more than', but do not understand 'less than'. A few average attainers understand the concept of adding two small numbers to make a larger number. However, in a satisfactory lesson, a group activity was insufficiently challenging for children of average attainment. They rolled a dice, mentally noted the number, and removed from a tray an equal number of counters. No recording, or other extension work, was required. In this lesson, children with special educational needs, well supported by a teaching assistant, made good progress in repeating simple patterns. Many children can place teddies in order of size, and 'in front of' and 'behind' other teddies. They do not understand the concept of 'between'. They understand the meanings of 'short', 'tall', 'small' and 'large', and can recognise simple shapes. Some higher attainers know a little about the properties of shapes. Many opportunities are missed to include mathematical learning in play sessions. For example, children do not learn to count money or buy tickets on the bus in the outside play area. Although teachers plan well together for mathematical activities, mathematics is not fully integrated with other areas of learning.

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

78. A few children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. In the playground, teachers repeatedly urge children to look at the changing colours of leaves, but do not extend their knowledge by comparing shapes of leaves or names of trees. They do know that a magnet will 'pick up' some metals, but will not pick up plastics. They have very limited knowledge of exploration and investigation, and some opportunities are missed to use resources to develop scientific skills. Children have few opportunities to discover why things happen and how things work. They are rarely asked to draw or demonstrate to record their findings. All children enjoy making small, imaginative models from construction sets. Most children can start and stop a tape recorder when listening to pre-recorded stories. All children, including those with special educational needs, have adequate control of the computer mouse. They play computer games to support mathematical and literacy skills, and can type their names in various sized fonts. However, staff do not monitor closely enough the use of the classroom computers.

## **Creative development**

79. Creative development is satisfactory, and most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. In a good session, led by a teaching assistant, children discussed the characteristics of fruit and vegetables and made attractive prints from cut sections. Some higher attaining children successfully made repeating patterns. All children enjoy collage with a variety of materials, but their drawings are very immature. In a satisfactory lesson, children made clay models of a large variety of fruits. Although they looked closely at the characteristics of the fruit, their work was simplistic. The teacher did not question them about how their work might be improved. Attractive displays of work in both classes contribute to children's spiritual development. The use of imaginative play is underdeveloped in the Foundation Stage. Children use their imaginations when playing together, but teachers rarely improve learning by initiating or stimulating activities.

## **Physical development**

80. Children's physical development is good, and most are likely to achieve the early learning goals. During the inspection, they skipped and jumped very confidently in large spaces. They cycled, balanced on stilts, and kicked tennis balls very accurately over long distances. They posed in good shooting positions for basketball but, in an unplanned session, were not directed into positions where they could realistically attempt to score. Generally, they are not encouraged to develop activities, or attempt new activities. In the classroom, they confidently use glue spreaders and modelling tools. They have good control of scissors, and cut safely and with improving accuracy. Their physical co-ordination is very good.

## **ENGLISH**

81. Throughout the school the pupils' achievements in English are good. The emphasis the school places on the subject has been justified. Standards have been maintained with some improvements since the previous inspection, for example opportunities for spiritual development are identified in some lessons as the pupils explore the feelings of characters in stories. The work in English is based on the National Literacy Strategy which the school is, quite properly, adapting to the needs of the pupils, based on the skills and understanding they bring with them to school, as well as on the analysis the teachers make of test results. The subject is currently well planned and soundly resourced. The monitoring of the teaching and of the pupils' standards is carefully used to identify where improvements can be made, for example in renewing some of the books which have become worn out, or targeting the teaching of writing. There is no sense of complacency as the staff seek better ways of doing this. On the contrary there is a clear desire and determination to continue to raise standards.
82. The pupils make good progress in Year 1 having entered these classes with lower than average levels in speaking and listening skills and only modest skills in reading and writing. By the end of the year they are achieving average standards in English. They make good progress in Year 2 so that by the time they are seven years of age and move to the junior school they are above the national average in reading and in writing. The school is particularly successful in promoting reading and writing among the boys, and both boys and girls make better than average progress in the subject as a whole. Pupils from ethnic groups also make good progress. By the time they are seven the pupils are generally articulate, speaking easily and with confidence on a variety of topics and to different sorts of people, to their fellow pupils, the staff and visitors. For example as they discuss the feelings of the characters in stories, such as the Troll in Three Billy Goats Gruff. In assembly they confidently read poems, both ones they like and those they have written themselves.
83. The extra attention the school has given to work with selected groups of pupils to

improve their understanding and use of phonics (letter sounds) for both reading and spelling has helped to raise standards. The care and attention paid to pupils with special educational needs, especially the well managed support of the teaching assistants ensures that they make good progress achieving standards that are better than would otherwise be the case. Pupils who arrive with little English are helped sensitively and well so that they make good progress with the language and quickly feel at home in the school. The inclusion of all pupils in all the activities in English is a good feature of the work of the school.

84. The good level of attention paid in all classes to the pupils' reading ensures that they make good progress and most develop into competent readers who enjoy books. The careful teaching ensures that the pupils use a number of ways to work out unfamiliar words and that they learn to recognise and use punctuation marks for both reading and writing.
85. The pupils are encouraged to write freely both in response to work in English, such as writing the captions for photographs of fellow pupils playing musical instruments, as well as in other subjects, such as in religious education or history. Particularly in the classes in Year 2, the standards of writing are average or better whether it is an English task or one for another subject. The same levels of expectation are not found in all the Year 1 classes. Overall, the expectations of teachers for those pupils capable of achieving much higher than average standards are not made clear to them, and as a consequence they are not challenged enough. The targets which are set for the pupils provide them with something to aim for, but as they are expressed in general terms, for some pupils they are easy to achieve. Spelling is well taught and by Year 2 most of the pupils' writing is spelled correctly, or is phonetically reasonable. Their handwriting is generally even and clear and makes use of full stops and capital letters from Year 1 onwards.
86. All the teaching of English is at least satisfactory, most is good and some is very good. The teachers plan co-operatively in year groups and this enables good practice to be readily shared improving the quality of the pupils' learning. Good use is made of resources to enable the pupils to make the best use they can of the time. However some of the school's organisation, such as staggered play times, and time spent on domestic arrangements, reduce the available learning time unnecessarily. This means that work cannot always be completed or the endings of lessons are rushed and the consolidation of what has been learned cannot be ensured. The very good quality of relationships within the school and the teachers' knowledge of their pupils mean that the methods they use are appropriate to each class. As a result the pupils learn well, even though they do not always have as clear an understanding of what they are doing, and why, as they could have. The work done at home supports the school's work in English well, and good use is made of the reading diaries to maintain good contact between teachers and parents about the pupils' progress. The teachers mark the pupils' work carefully and often add encouraging and sometimes challenging comments to encourage improvements. The more formal assessments of the pupils' work and the test results are analysed by the year group managers to provide help in planning future work. The school is reviewing the tests used to improve this aspect of assessment.
87. The subject is currently overseen well by the year managers. However, as part of the development of the subject in the curriculum, to provide for more effective continuity between the years, the school has identified the need for a subject manager and the post is planned. The good quality of the English in the school contributes significantly to standards in all parts of the curriculum and to the overall progress that the pupils make.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. Pupils' attainment at age seven is below average when compared with all schools



nationally. Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment below national expectations and make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2.

89. Standards have fallen since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be above average at the end of Year 2. Subsequently, the school's emphasis on literacy reduced the time and resources available for mathematics. The school has not yet responded to the strengths and weaknesses indicated by the results of the national tests in 2001. The very recently appointed headteacher has already made some changes to improve teaching and learning in the subject. For example, she has allocated a teaching assistant to each Year 1 mathematics lesson. In Year 2, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, currently receive insufficient support. However, inadequate challenge is sometimes provided for higher attaining pupils in both year groups resulting in some underachievement. Evidence from the current inspection, early in the school year, indicates that most pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the expected Level 2 in the 2003 national tests.
90. Pupils of average attainment in Year 1 know some number facts to ten, and can use a number line to add to 20. They can explain why calculating with non-standard measurements produces variable answers. Most pupils recognise the values of coins up to 50 pence, and higher attainers know that four five-pence coins equal 20 pence. In a good Year 1 lesson, the teacher wrote the learning objectives on the blackboard, and asked all pupils to discuss the objectives with their neighbour. In this fast-paced lesson, the teacher very clearly illustrated the language of length and height. Pupils confidently measured and cut paper to demonstrate their understanding, but higher attaining pupils were not set sufficiently demanding differentiated tasks. Class targets in Year 1 are related to the numeracy strategy but not to the attainment of individuals or groups of pupils. Consequently, targets are too demanding for some pupils, and inadequately demanding for others.
91. Average pupils in Year 2 confidently use a 100 square to identify numbers, and count on in fives and tens. They can order numbers to 100, and demonstrate mental addition and subtraction of single numbers to 100. A few higher attaining pupils order numbers to 1000, and add and subtract single digits to 1000. They can double numbers to 20. In a satisfactory introductory session of mental arithmetic, the teacher was unable fully to involve all pupils because she could not respond quickly enough to the answers from the very wide attainment range in the class. The pace was too slow for higher attainers, who were calling for higher numbers, and too fast for lower attainers who required specific help. Generally, average pupils have too few strategies for solving mental number problems. All pupils have good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes, and can identify some three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils accurately calculate the numbers of faces, edges and corners on a cube, cuboid, triangular prism and cylinder. Planning for pupils of below average attainment has been unsatisfactory in this area of mathematics because the concepts were taught too closely together, without assessment and consolidation of shapes.
92. Pupils have few methods of recording their work individually, but collaborative work by whole classes includes some tally charts and graphs. Teachers allow pupils too few opportunities to engage with open-ended problem-solving activities again leading to some underachievement by higher attainers. Pupils take pride in their written work, and in the cumulative, wide-ranging workbooks used in Years 1 and 2.
93. ICT is underused in mathematics. During the inspection, children of average attainment in Year 1 confidently completed a dot-to-dot program, but much of the available software is outdated. Some links are established with other curriculum areas. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied shape in the works of Matisse.
94. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Six lessons were seen

during the inspection; four were satisfactory and two were good. Although teachers in each year group plan together, planning is sometimes too rigid to enable lessons to be differentiated to meet the mathematical needs of all pupils. In most lessons seen, pupils did not know the learning objectives and could not assess their progress. Teachers use praise effectively to acknowledge individual achievement and pupils are not afraid to be seen to make mistakes. Marking is generally good and helps pupils improve their work. Teachers' comments relate well to the individual pupil and include informal reminders and compliments.

95. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers use tick-sheets to monitor progress in class, but pupils' progress is not tracked through the school. The results of national tests are noted in some classes, but are not analysed in depth to identify areas of weakness throughout the school.
96. The two recently appointed co-ordinators are enthusiastic, but are inexperienced in the subject. Following an audit of mathematics resources, they purchased a variety of modern equipment for all classrooms. They are aware of continuing deficiencies in ICT software throughout the school. They are to receive specialised training in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. They have had little time yet to raise standards in the subject, and are to revise an undated policy deficient in ICT.

## **SCIENCE**

97. Standards are average. However, the pupils do achieve well and make progress throughout the school. The impact of the good work in literacy is clearly shown in the pupils' written explanation of their observations and investigations, which is generally above average. In the last inspection report, standards were judged to be above average. Teachers' assessment in science, over the last three years out of four, has shown broadly average standards.
98. The teachers motivate the pupils' learning well by adopting, whenever possible, a practical and investigative approach to the work. In all the observed lessons, the pupils showed considerable enthusiasm for their practical tasks. As a result of the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, classroom investigations are usually carried out well. Of particular note is the effective way in which the pupils co-operate and collaborate in the use of the science resources. This has a very significant impact upon the quality of learning. The teachers' thoughtful and thorough preparation for, and deployment of, necessary resources greatly assists the effectiveness of any investigative work and the pupils' learning; a considerable strength in the overall good quality of science teaching.
99. Opportunities are taken well by the teachers to extend the pupils' scientific and technical language. For example, in a very good Year 1 lesson on sound, in a class with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the teacher appropriately used the words 'vibrate' and 'vibration' when introducing the topic. To consolidate the concept, she set up a demonstration using a tambourine, a drum and rice. The pupils were enthralled and most clearly understood the link between sound, sound waves and vibration. This is good, effective practice. Similarly, the teachers recognise the scientific importance of pupils understanding the concept of prediction. They seek, generally successfully, to be able to use the term regularly and with the pupils' understanding. This places the pupils in a strong position to understand the notion of fair testing when they come upon this as an aspect of their future work.
100. An understanding of prediction formed a very important aspect of some Year 2 work on electrical circuits. In the introduction the teachers used effective methods in building up the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. This considerably helped to consolidate the pupils' learning. However, all the different circuit diagrams that had been prepared by the teachers were considered and a prediction about whether or not

the bulb would light was decided as a class. Whilst the modelling of science investigation is good practice, to ensure the learning objectives were clear and helped pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, the subsequent practical activity did little to extend the learning of higher attaining pupils as they had to use little of their own initiative. In one good lesson, however, the needs of higher attaining pupils were well met by the use of open-ended questions and the seeking of explanations of the pupils' findings. This is very effective practice in the support of good learning. Generally, however, whilst the teachers have high expectations of, for example, behaviour and presentation, they offer insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

101. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is well supported by the subject manager who is beginning to be very effective. As she sees colleagues' planning on a half-termly basis, the subject manager is able to advise or suggest modifications, ensure there is a whole-school approach to science and identify unnecessary repetition. The subject manager has a clear idea of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and intends, for example, to expand further investigative work, unify the assessment system and provide more suitable software to support the use of ICT in science. Whilst the year planning for science is generally full, on occasion the learning intentions are too general and result in undifferentiated tasks. The teachers do, in their planning, however, take every opportunity to link science with pupils' other learning experiences. For example, in one good lesson the teacher 'conducted' the class groups when they had made simple instruments in their work on sound. This was done in the knowledge that on the following day a music workshop would focus on the sounds made by different wind instruments.
102. The quality of relationships between the teachers and their pupils is very good. They know the pupils very well, which aids considerably the quality of learning in science. Work is well and thoughtfully marked and assessed. Along with the useful and necessary praise, the teachers do suggest areas for improvement. However, the setting of targets in science is not yet a regular feature of the work. Both Years 1 and 2 assess and record pupils' attainment and progress but the systems used are different, hindering a whole-school approach to the subject.
103. Good use is made of teaching assistants who are efficient and very effective. They assist the pupils well and, where they are aware of the science planning, which is the case in some classes, their time is better used. Their support helps to maintain the pace of the learning. Lack of their availability in the classroom in Year 2 practical sessions sometimes leads to the teacher having insufficient time to consolidate pupils' learning in a concluding session.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Art and design holds a very important place within the school's curriculum. Evidence of good quality work abounds throughout the school. The range of art and design experiences, as illustrated in a well-presented portfolio of pupils' previous work, is wide. These wide-ranging experiences, coupled with good teaching, lead to standards above those normally expected of seven-year-old pupils.
105. In a particularly good Year 2 lesson on sketching, the teacher's good planning, knowledge and understanding of the subject, and confidence in demonstrating skills, led to very positive results. The pupils also gained in confidence, handling pencils well and showing improving techniques, for example small strokes of the pencil rather than solid line drawing. The learning was very well consolidated in the concluding session when the pupils discussed whether they had achieved their objectives and what they had learned.

106. Opportunities to extend pupils' learning are occasionally restricted, and sometimes lost, when the teacher does not give them sufficient time and when planning is too general and does not indicate specific steps in the development of particular skills which may be identified, questioned and consolidated.
107. Collage features strongly in the pupils' work, which builds very successfully on work done in reception, for example a feathered duck. A particularly good collage of scarecrows complements a wonderful collection of scarecrow models brought in by pupils as part of a competition. It is also a very good example of how the school seeks to work with parents in motivating and developing the pupils' artistic interests.
108. The school is very successful in extending the pupils' artistic appreciation with good examples of work in the style of such artists as Kandinsky, Braque, Miro and Monet. A particularly good initiative has been the school's involvement in the National Gallery's 'take one picture' programme. It resulted in some good quality work on Uccello's 'St George and the Dragon'. This is a good example of the positive influence of the fairly newly appointed art co-ordinator. The pupils' cultural development was also well supported by painting in the style of the Chinese. Good observational skills are evident in drawings of flowers in quite fine detail for pupils of this age. Other artistic experiences involve clay work, bark rubbing, computer, tonal washes, doodles and some large-scale work, for example Jurassic Park.
109. The teachers inspire the pupils and the pupils, in turn, are keen to respond, showing great enthusiasm for art. This was illustrated well by a pupil who would not be rushed in his explanations of the artistic merits of the model scarecrows to a supportive, but clearly busy, father at the end of afternoon school.
110. The standard of collaboration and co-operation between the pupils, in all the three observed lessons, was at least good. This had a very positive impact upon the quality of the pupils' learning as they shared resources very sensibly. A clear indication of the very good relationships in the school is the way in which the pupils show appreciation of the efforts of others even when they have not been so artistically successful. This assists pupils' confidence and, inevitably, the standard of their art work. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to enjoy art and to make progress as a result of the good quality support they receive.
111. Art and design is a strength of the school. It is used well to enhance work in other subjects, for example geography, when illustrating fruits from home and abroad. There is no formal assessment of the subject. Resources are generally satisfactory but the range of brushes of different sizes is limited.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. During the inspection only two lessons were observed, one in each year group. Judgements are based on the good teaching and learning in these lessons, pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, photographs of completed work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. This evidence indicates that curriculum requirements are being met and that standards are at least satisfactory at the end of Year 2. The design and technology key issue identified in the previous inspection report has been fully addressed.
113. The good Year 1 lesson seen was very well organised to include all pupils in the process of designing and making a variety of constructions. Learning objectives were very clear, and printed instructions were given to each mixed attainment group of pupils. The tasks were varied and pupils were highly motivated. The teacher continually checked that each group was focused on the printed task. Consequently, most groups completed their constructions by the end of the lesson. Although outcomes were

generally good, pupils' independent learning was restricted by the teacher's pre-selection of materials. At this early stage of the school year, average pupils in Year 2 have good understanding of design processes and realise the importance of a good design. Consequently, progress from Year 1 is judged to be good.

114. Average pupils in Year 2 fluently discuss the design and construction of models of Noah's Ark, and the importance of improving unsatisfactory designs. They discriminate between suitable and unsuitable materials for a variety of projects, and had good knowledge of a wide range of joining materials, including hot glue, wire, tapes and staples.
115. In the good Year 2 lesson seen, a group of higher attaining pupils were paired to build working models from stage-by-stage colour illustrations, using a technical construction set. A teaching assistant carefully monitored each stage to ensure a coherent construction process, with guaranteed outcomes. Boys and girls worked very well together, particularly when discussing mistakes and proposed improvements. They had previously drawn their own designs for Noah's Ark, and now selected suitable materials for the construction. The teacher improved their learning by demonstrating practical skills and asking very good questions, such as 'How could you make it stronger?' All pupils in the group made good progress. For example, a completed ark was equipped with a steering wheel, carpet and an animal's feeding area. In a good plenary session for the whole class, the special educational needs group described their work confidently, and were applauded by the class.
116. Schemes of work and long-term plans are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator recognises many weaknesses in the subject. For example, assessment is informal, and pupils' skills are unevenly developed. The co-ordinator has satisfactory knowledge and expertise, and is keen to learn. She has highlighted weaknesses in the use of ICT and a resourcing deficiency in resistant materials.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

117. Standards in history and geography are comparable to standards nationally for pupils aged seven years. Standards have not improved since the previous inspection, when deficiencies in history assessment were judged to be limiting pupils' attainment. The school has introduced self-assessment worksheets for pupils, but teachers' assessment procedures have not developed sufficiently.
118. Three history lessons and five geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from these lessons, scrutiny of photographs and completed work, and interviews with pupils, indicates that standards are satisfactory in each subject at the end of each year.
119. Written work by the previous Year 1 shows that the identification of pupils' previous experiences is the basis of history and geography teaching. Pupils knew that they lived in Gravesend in the county of Kent. They examined photographs of the Thames, and wrote about some river activities. They identified various types of transport, and knew that the motorcar and the pony and trap originated in different eras. They examined in detail the events of the Queen's 50 year reign. In lessons, teachers do not always use relevant technical language. For example, in a satisfactory Year 1 history lesson, the terms 'seed drill' and 'broadcast' were not applied to the planting process. In preparation for a Year 2 history lesson on chronology, pupils were asked to complete very good homework questionnaires about their early life. Although the excellent family responses included much interesting detail, the subsequent lesson did not require pupils to transfer the facts to a simple timeline. Pupils in Year 2 have good recollections of previous events in their school life, including the festivals of Diwali and Easter. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed by teachers' reminders of feelings related to

special events.

120. During the inspection, Year 1 classes were investigating the sources of a variety of fruits and vegetables. All teachers used the same lesson plan, but the quality of teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory. In the good lessons, teachers made very good use of resources and vocabulary. Pupils shared observations of taste and texture. Where there was unsatisfactory teaching, the teacher did not ask questions and did not ensure that all pupils were fully involved. In Year 2, pupils of all attainments, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in geography. In a good lesson seen, most pupils identified their school on a simple map, and explored the site to locate a variety of features. A higher attaining pupil noticed that a single tree in the playground was represented on the map as a pair of trees. However, the teacher did not use a full range of technical language to extend pupils' vocabulary.
121. Progress overall is satisfactory in each subject. The school's emphasis on literacy skills encourages pupils to write extensively about their researches, and much time in history and geography lessons is allocated to writing. Other methods of recording are underused. Presentation is good throughout the school and teachers' marking is at least satisfactory.
122. Pupils of all attainments have good attitudes to the subjects. However, independent research skills are not developed, although higher attaining pupils are clearly capable of using reference books and other sources of information.
123. Schemes of work and long-term plans are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, and has good knowledge and expertise in the subject. Her informal assessments of strengths and weaknesses in each year group have not yet included monitoring of teaching and learning. She is, however, very committed to improving the use of ICT in the subjects. She recognises the importance of good links with the Foundation Stage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

124. There has been a marked improvement in the provision for ICT and in the pupils' achievements in the subject since the previous inspection. All the points raised in the key issues for action in the earlier report have been met. The pupils' achievements are good in those parts of the subject which they undertake. The training of the staff has been effective and they are now much more confident in teaching the subject. The planning of the work is satisfactory. This planning, which is based on national guidance, includes a list of skills to be achieved. This is used as a means of assessment, though it needs further refinement to be fully effective in providing targets for improvement. The use of ICT to support other subjects is not yet fully developed. It is satisfactory in English, but less so in mathematics, science and the foundation subjects.
125. The improvements in ICT have been largely brought about by the creation and careful use of the computer suite in which class-sized groups can be taught. There are still difficulties in teaching a whole group of children simultaneously, but the school has already set about seeking ways in which this can be better accomplished through the purchase of extra apparatus or the linking of the existing computers.
126. The staff have received training for teaching the subject and are well supported by the co-ordinator. The joint planning of work in year groups ensures that the best methods of teaching the subject which ensure that the pupils learn are shared between the teachers. The co-ordinator works with both year groups to facilitate this.
127. Good use is made of the teaching assistants in supporting the pupils' learning of ICT skills. They are also effective in ensuring that those pupils with special educational

needs are supported and achieve well. The teaching of ICT is most effective in those lessons dedicated to the subject and, overall, is now satisfactory. Where it is part of a group of activities in which the pupils engage as a matter of individual choice there is little teaching, though the pupils do practise the skills learnt in previous lessons and re-enforce the learning.

128. The pupils are very competent in using the mouse to log onto the computer, to select and open programs and to react to prompts on the screen. These skills are basic to the use of computers and ensure that the pupils can profit from other programs as they are presented. They can select, edit and save what they have produced on the screen. They print off what they have created when they are pleased with it. The drawing programme they are currently using provides them with opportunities to produce both abstract designs and representational pictures, and pupils do both with ease. They use reading programs to support the work in literacy, reading the 'Big Books' used in the literacy hour for themselves from the screen. Under supervision they learn how to programme the floor turtle or 'roamer' which they can program to move in a particular pattern on the floor when they are judged competent.
129. The staff are at pains to ensure that all the children receive a similar experience with ICT. It is a particularly strong feature of the school's provision that two lunchtime clubs are run by the co-ordinator specifically for those pupils who do not have ready access to a computer at home.

## **MUSIC**

130. The school successfully seeks to broaden the range of pupils' musical experiences by using the expertise of visiting specialists. During the period of the inspection the school ran a music workshop in which all classes took part individually with their class teachers and a visiting musician. A peripatetic teacher also works with class teachers dealing with such aspects of the musical curriculum as rhythm. On the basis of this evidence, and the observation of pupils' singing in three assemblies, standards in performing skills are above those expected nationally for pupils of infant school age. Pupils achieve well in this aspect of the subject, including those with special educational needs. There was no evidence available to make a secure judgement across the whole musical curriculum to include the pupils' composing, appraising and listening skills.
131. Pupils have a well-developed sense of rhythm. When playing on a wide range of instruments, such as cow bells, washboard and drums, with a piano accompaniment, the pupils show a good ability to play a particular beat in the bar and maintain the rhythm accurately. The good range of untuned percussion instruments, provided by the teacher, was sufficient for one instrument per pupil, which enhanced their motivation and, consequently, the learning. Further musical motivation to support very good learning in a similar lesson was provided through a very effective demonstration of a drum kit. The pupils showed wonder at the sounds made by the different drums, cymbals and sticks and brushes. The teacher's high expectations in this lesson for the extension of the pupils' musical vocabulary led to a significant proportion of pupils remembering the names of parts of the kit, for example snare and tom-tom drums, high hat and crash cymbals. One pupil observed 'it should be called a one-man band'; good perception for one so young, but an indicator of how the good teachers encourage pupils to express their views.
132. Whilst all the pupils throughout the school enjoyed, and were motivated by, the experiences provided by the music workshop, good planning by a Year 1 teacher effectively linked their musical and science learning about the creation and sources of sound. This was a good initiative which helped to extend the pupils' musical language and understanding of how different instruments produce a variety of sounds, to their

experiments in science on sound creation with elastic bands and pipes etc. The pupils showed wonder and excitement when invited to play panpipes, an organ pipe, a didgeridoo, a trumpet and a trombone. Despite the excitement, and, as in most lessons, the pupils' behaviour was very good.

133. The pupils sing well in assembly. All join in, encouraged by the fact that their teachers all do and show enjoyment. The pupils sing with expression, generally in time and in a well-modulated way. Music is used well as the pupils enter and leave assembly. In one assembly, they sensibly and ably beat out the rhythm of the song whilst waiting their turn to be dismissed. Reference is not always made by the teachers to the music being played in assembly, which is a lost opportunity to extend pupils' learning.
134. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The subject is currently overseen by the two year managers and the headteacher. No formal assessments of pupils' progress are made, but day-to-day assessments are good. The lack of a pianist on the staff restricts some of the pupils' performing opportunities, but the school manages this current position well.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. It was possible to observe only two lessons, both of which had a gymnastics focus. As work in dance and games activities were not observed, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement of the subject's standards. In the previous report it was noted that the pupils exceeded expectations for seven-year-olds in gymnastics, dance and games activities. Attainment in gymnastics, in the two observed lessons, was in line with expectations for seven-year-olds, but the pupils are gaining confidence, making progress and achieving well.
136. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pupils show very positive attitudes to the subject, which the vast majority clearly enjoy, which helps to ensure that learning is at least satisfactory. The majority of pupils, especially those in Year 2, understand why it is important to respond immediately, in physical education lessons, to the class teacher's instructions. As a result of this important understanding, lessons are well and safely controlled. However, in one lesson, the safe deployment of apparatus was done in such a way that about one-third of the time available for physical activity was lost. This is an unsatisfactory use of available time, particularly as the pace of both lessons was a little slow.
137. Pupils have a good understanding of why warm-up activities are important. In one lesson, the teacher reinforced the understanding well by asking the pupils to feel their heartbeats and judge whether they had been working hard enough. A cool-down session was also included but there was no input from the teacher to indicate why this phase of their learning was important. The teachers and the teaching assistants give good encouragement and support to the pupils who are not physically confident, which sometimes includes those with special educational needs. As a result, the learning of these pupils is good and they gain in confidence.
138. The pupils have effective control of their bodies when they move along, and over, a range of apparatus, including benches, beams and tables. Some of the pupils' movements were very well co-ordinated and imaginative. Whilst some pupils were asked by the teacher to demonstrate their movement, there was insufficient emphasis placed on how they may be improved, for example safe and appropriate landing when jumping off apparatus. However, most significantly, the pupils show appreciation of others' efforts. This is a most important aspect of the pupils' learning in physical education and which the teachers most appropriately emphasised.
139. The lessons are satisfactorily planned in line with the school's policy. There is no



subject manager; the headteacher is monitoring oversight in the short term. No formal assessments of the pupils' performance are currently made. Learning is greatly assisted by the good range of apparatus and resources, and the availability of a large and well-maintained hall.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Standards of achievement in religious education are broadly in line with what would be expected of pupils currently in Year 2. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection when both attainment and progress were found to be unsatisfactory. All the requirements for improvement identified in the previous inspection report's key issues for action have been met, and the subject now plays its full part in the broad and balanced curriculum which the school provides.
141. The improvements in religious education have also supported the better provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. All the teaching is now satisfactory and some good. The training that has been provided through and by the co-ordinator for religious education has enabled the teachers to demonstrate increased security in their knowledge of the subject. The timetabling and the planning of religious education as a lesson rather than as a follow-up to the assemblies have also been instrumental in improving the teaching and learning in the subject. The increased use of religious objects to provide a realistic basis to the teaching of religious education has helped to improve the quality of the pupils' learning. It gives an added interest to the teaching. The inclusion of Judaism and Hinduism into the religious education curriculum alongside the study of Christian themes, has added interest to the subject as well as bringing the school into line with the requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus.
142. The pupils have a sound understanding of the work they have done, and relate it to their own lives, for example when they study Moses and the commandments as rules for living, or when another class write their own important things to remember and put them in a cardboard box, like a Jewish Mezuzah, beside the classroom door.
143. They use their knowledge and understanding of religious stories and ideas in other subjects and on occasions other than religious education lessons. For example, they bring these insights into assemblies, or into comments about the feelings of characters in stories or in history.
144. The standards of achievement in religious education, though improved, still suffer from a lowered expectation of the standards that the pupils are capable of achieving. Where less is expected of them, both in quality and quantity, less is delivered. This is particularly true for the potentially higher attaining pupils.
145. The support provided for those pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve satisfactory work, while those with English as an additional language, who are not withdrawn from religious education for religious reasons, also make good progress.
146. Pupils respond well to the teaching, their behaviour is good and as their relationships are very good this adds to the ease and quality of their learning. Religious education plays a significant role in the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The study of Judaism, for example, in thinking about the practical ways in which Jews regularly remember the law in the form of the shema, helps them to think about how they can remember the moral laws which affect their lives.
147. The school is continuing to look for more direct means of enabling the pupils to learn about religion by using religious objects, or meeting people from different faith communities, as these methods have proved successful in improving not only the standards of work, but the pupils' enjoyment and interest in the subject. This also

affects the teachers' positively. As yet there is no effective method for assessing the pupils' achievements, or measuring the standards attained by them. This is an area of development which the manager is contemplating.

148. The subject is well managed by a very enthusiastic manager who delights in sharing the new knowledge acquired from in-service courses with colleagues as well as with the pupils.