

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bean, Nr. Dartford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118266

Headteacher: Miss J A Hastings

Reporting inspector: Mrs S D Morgan  
1355

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 247859

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Bean Nr. Dartford Kent
Postcode:	DA2 8AW
Telephone number:	01474 833225
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Goble
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1355	Mrs S D Morgan	Registered inspector	Science ICT Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught? How well does the school care for its pupils?
19798	Mrs J O'Keefe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27654	Mrs R Scahill	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Music Religious education English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11982	Mr R Morris	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Equality of opportunity Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bean is a primary school of average size. It has 191 pupils on its roll in Years 1 to 6 and 30 children in the reception year. The school roll has been stable, and the reception class is oversubscribed. However, the number of pupils in five classes is below the admission number of 30. This is due to a small number of families moving out of the area. The number of boys and girls is similar, although numbers vary significantly between year groups. Almost all pupils are white, with about three per cent of pupils coming from other ethnic groups. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A small number of Traveller pupils attend the school. Thirty-three pupils, currently at Bean did not start their education at the school and 29 per cent of pupils in Year 6 have not had continuous education at the school. Many pupils come from below average socio-economic backgrounds. However, the number of families claiming their entitlement to free school meals has been declining. About four per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The current attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs has been above the national average for the last five years. An average proportion has statements of special educational need. Most pupils' special needs relate to learning, emotional and behavioural problems and speech or communication difficulties. A significant number of staff changes have occurred during the last two years.

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

The school provides a sound education. Pupils are valued and work hard in an environment which is caring and supportive. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Despite significant changes in staffing the headteacher, senior managers and governors have developed a team which is focusing successfully on raising standards. Current standards show some improvement, and are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements in almost all other subjects are satisfactory or good. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with a number of strengths, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in English, religious education, geography, history and music throughout the school, and in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- The promotion of a caring ethos, which values all in the school community and creates an environment in which pupils enjoy learning.
- Staff know pupils very well. They are enthusiastic and have a good range of subject knowledge and this is leading to improving standards.
- Relationships within the school community are very good and as a result pupils behave well.
- The school is well led and managed. Staff have a clear focus on improving the school and a commitment to raising standards.

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

- The level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils in some lessons.
- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils' attendance, which is poor.
- An increase in the amount of curriculum time in Years 1 and 2 which is below the nationally recommended minimum, together with the proportion of time allocated to mathematics.

*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. Overall improvement since that time has been satisfactory, with good improvement recently. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, staff work as a team and morale is high. The school has focused on a range of initiatives to improve standards and the quality of teaching has improved. Almost all of the key issues identified in the last report have been dealt with systematically. For example, the quality and use of assessment data in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is now good and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Senior managers and subject co-ordinators carry out their monitoring roles effectively and this has led to improvements in teaching and learning. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and this has led to improved coverage of the National Curriculum. However, the issue relating to improving standards in ICT remains. The school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	D	E
mathematics	B	D	D	E
science	B	E	C	D

  

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

Results have shown some fluctuation over recent years. However, improvement for all subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. Overall results in the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 were below average. They were well below those of schools of a similar type (that is schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). Test results are affected by a number of factors. A significant number of pupils join the school after the normal admission date. Over seventeen per cent of the pupils currently at Bean did not start their education at the school. Some pupils come with no information about their prior attainment and a number have special educational needs. School records also show that the poor attendance pattern of some of these pupils has a negative impact on test results. Consequently, comparing the school's results to those achieved nationally creates a somewhat negative picture and does not fully reflect pupils' achievements. Analysis of the results of pupils who were at the school at the start of Year 3 and took the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 indicate that overall they achieved well. The targets set with the local education authority for national test results at the end of Year 6 were very ambitious and not met. Those set for 2003 have been further increased and will be hard to reach, even though current standards show improvement.

Results in Year 2 national tests in writing and mathematics have been below average in recent years. In reading they have been above average. In the 2002 national tests, pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved standards in reading that were below average compared with those nationally and well below those of similar schools. This represents a slight drop in standards from 2001. Results in writing have fluctuated. They showed some decline in 2002 and were well below average when compared to those of similar schools. In mathematics results have shown some improvement, but have been below average or low when compared to those nationally and well below those of similar schools. Teacher assessments in science in 2002 were below average when compared with national figures and well below those of similar schools. On entry to reception, few children have pre-school experience and start school with below average skills and knowledge in all areas. Overall, considering their starting points, the reception class children are achieving satisfactorily and about three-quarters are likely to attain the nationally expected early learning goals by Year 1.

Overall, current standards for pupils in Years 1 to 6 show improvement, and are broadly in line with national



expectations. Overall pupils are achieving well, reflecting the recent improvements in teaching and learning. Evidence from lessons and work in books indicates that pupils' knowledge and skills are being systematically developed. In almost all subjects, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils achieve well in English, religious education, geography, history and music throughout the school, and in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. In ICT, pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Children whose education is interrupted by moving schools, and those whose attendance is poor, do less well than other pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard in lessons. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Lunchtimes are relaxed and friendly. There have been five temporary exclusions during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Very good relationships result in pupils behaving well. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below that found nationally and this has a negative impact on the standards attained. However, it is beginning to improve.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 3 to 6. All of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, with a significant increase in the proportion of good or better lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching, during a period when there has been considerable staff turnover. Pupils' learning reflects the overall quality of teaching. Teaching was good in English throughout the school. In mathematics and science it was satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Relationships between staff and pupils, together with teachers' good organisation and management of classroom activities, were particular strengths, which enabled pupils to work productively. Throughout the school, teachers carefully assess what pupils have learnt and this helps them plan future work. In the best lessons, varied and interesting activities were well planned and teachers had high expectations of what pupils could achieve. Teachers' good use of learning support staff enabled pupils to make good progress. The focus in many classes on the development and application of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is a strength. However, in the reception class, too few opportunities are provided for independent, creative or imaginative play. Currently too little time is allocated to the teaching of mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and this slows down pupils' learning. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is not yet consistent, across the school, and this is a weakness. In some lessons work is not sufficiently challenging for higher-attaining pupils. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school has many imaginative approaches to improving literacy, especially for boys. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). Links with the community are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. However, teaching time in Years 1 and 2 is below the nationally recommended minimum and not enough time is allocated to mathematics. Currently opportunities provided for ICT do not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Lessons are planned carefully to cater for pupils who have specific needs. Pupils are supported effectively by well trained learning support assistants and this enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily promoted. However, too few opportunities are planned to develop pupils' multi- cultural awareness and understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Staff know pupils very well and take good care of them. Procedures for dealing with bullying and promoting positive behaviour are good. Assessment of pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science is good and information is used well to help teachers plan for individual pupil needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents are generally happy with the work of the school. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. However, there is insufficient consultation with parents on decisions relating to proposed changes.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is ably supported by a strong, close working team of staff in the successful drive to improve standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for development. They have a good working relationship with the staff and are well organised. Governors ensure that the school meets almost all of its statutory duties with the exception of teaching in ICT.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good and have been used well to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good financial planning and the judicious use of special grants benefit the pupils and allow for further school improvement. Staff and governors work together to ensure that the money is spent efficiently. Overall, the principles of best value are satisfactorily applied. The school is well staffed and has satisfactory accommodation and learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and behaviour is good.</li><li>• Teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li><li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li><li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li><li>• The quality and amount of homework.</li></ul>

Comments were generally favourable, although the number of questionnaires returned was low. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports the positive comments, although teaching was found to be satisfactory overall. Inspectors found that the quality of information provided by the school and the range of activities outside of lessons to be satisfactory. The quality and amount of homework set was also found to be satisfactory. However, the amount of consultation with parents over proposed changes was found to be insufficient.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In this report, the term “standards” refers to pupils' attainment relative to some clear benchmark, such as National Curriculum levels or descriptions, at the end of a key stage. “Above average standards”, for example, means that a higher proportion of pupils of a particular age are succeeding at or beyond the level set than in the majority of schools. “Achievement” on the other hand, reflects the progress pupils make during their time in school. The pupils' prior attainment, what they can already do, is the reference point for pupils' achievement.
2. When they enter the reception class, most children have had little pre-school experience and come in with below average skills and knowledge in all areas. They make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. However, too few opportunities are provided for independent creative or imaginative play. Consequently they make insufficient progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. About three-quarters of the children are in line to attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they go into Year 1. Through careful observations, the teacher assesses each child's particular needs. As a result, children who have particular difficulties are identified early and given good support. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily in the reception class.
3. In the 2002 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, results in reading, writing and mathematics were below expectations nationally. When compared to those of similar schools (that is, schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), results were well below average. Based on teacher assessments, attainment in science was also below average. Results in mathematics had shown improvement over the last three years. However, all results showed some decline in 2002. Assessment information shows that there was a higher than average number of pupils in that year group with special educational needs and this together with some pupil mobility had an impact on results.
4. Results in Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated over recent years. However, improvement for all subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. In the 2002 national tests in English and mathematics, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were below those nationally, and well below those of schools of a similar type. In the science national tests, pupils attained standards that were average, but below those of similar schools. Girls performed better than boys in English and science, and in mathematics boys performed better than girls.
5. Test results are affected by a number of factors. A significant number of pupils join the school after the normal admission date. Over seventeen per cent of the pupils currently at Bean did not start their education at the school. Some pupils come with no information about their prior attainment and a number have special educational needs. School records also show that the poor attendance pattern of some of these pupils has a negative impact on test results. Consequently, comparing the school's results to those achieved nationally creates a somewhat negative picture and does not fully reflect pupils' achievements. Through its good assessment and tracking procedures the school successfully identifies individuals and groups who are underachieving. Using this information, appropriate steps have been taken to raise standards through a number of initiatives, such as the introduction of additional teaching groups both for higher and lower-attaining pupils. Analysis of the results of pupils who were at the school at the start of Year 3 and took the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 indicate that overall they achieved well.

6. The school's results in national assessments are also compared with those of similar schools. These comparisons are based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Overall, the results for 2002 are much worse than those of similar schools. Despite the socio-economic profile of the area being below average the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at Bean has been declining. Over two-thirds of the pupils do not have a cooked school meal but choose to bring a packed lunch. This has an impact on the number of pupils claiming their entitlement to free school meals. In the judgement of the inspection team this makes this comparison unreliable. However, comparing pupils' results with their prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 2 indicate that they achieved well. The targets set with the local education authority for national test results at the end of Year 6 were very ambitious, and not met. Those set for 2003 have been further increased and will be hard to reach, even though current standards show improvement.

7. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. A variety of methods are used to accommodate individuals' learning needs, setting targets that are appropriate for the pupils' development. In most lessons, appropriate work and challenges are set both for those who need extra help and support and often for higher-attaining pupils. However, in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 work is not always sufficiently challenging for higher-attainers and this slows progress. Small groups are also formed so that pupils have more concentrated help. For example, there are groups in the older classes who receive additional support for literacy and numeracy, while those in the youngest class benefit from regular additional support in all their lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator also works with individuals or small groups who have specific learning difficulties requiring a more specialist approach and they make good progress.

8. In their comments and responses to the questionnaire parents said that they thought their children made good progress. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that current attainment of pupils in Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations in English and science and below in mathematics. Given the below average attainment of many pupils when they join the school, overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievement is good. This is because work is well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise. Throughout the school, in almost all other subjects, pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, and standards in line with national expectations. In religious education, pupils achieve well. Work is carefully planned throughout the school and pupils are given opportunities to discuss a range of moral and social issues as well as matters of faith. The use of specialist teaching in music has a positive impact on the standards attained. Pupils' performance skills are developed well, they sing tunefully and older pupils compose short musical passages. Pupils' historical skills are consistently developed and they achieve well. They have planned opportunities for many first-hand experiences that bring the subject to life and this motivates them. However, in ICT pupils do not achieve as well as they should because not all aspects of the National Curriculum such as control and simulations have been covered.

9. The school is largely successful in meeting its aim to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. It evaluates the results of national assessments and its own internal assessments to check that no group of pupils is being disadvantaged. Where underachievement is identified, for example, in the standard of writing, particularly that of boys, appropriate action has been taken to bring about improvement. The use of this information is helping to ensure that, regardless of background, gender or prior attainment, pupils' achievements are broadly similar.

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

10. Pupils' have maintained their good attitudes to school and their work as was reported in the previous inspection. Parents commented that the school helped their children become mature and responsible. They also said that their children like school and that behaviour is good. Most pupils enjoy school and are keen to take part in activities both in and outside the classroom. In lessons, pupils listen well, show interest and are keen to answer questions and be involved. For example, when the reception class were having a dance lesson, they listened carefully, followed instructions well and concentrated throughout the lesson.

11. Overall, pupils behave well. In lessons, most pupils respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers, they work sensibly with little disruption. Pupils' behaviour around the school is also good. They move around the building in an orderly manner, opening doors for each other, staff and visitors. Lunchtimes are relaxed and friendly with pupils chatting happily with their friends. In the playground their play, although lively and exuberant, is not usually aggressive. There have been five fixed-term exclusions in the past year. These were all connected to one particular incident which was appropriately dealt with and do not indicate any overall patterns of oppressive behaviour.

12. Relationships are very good amongst pupils and between staff and pupils. This is a strength of the school. On several occasions during the inspection, pupils were seen to work together productively and to help each other constructively. For instance, in a Year 5 art and design lesson pupils were observed complimenting each other on their drawings. Pupils are outgoing, friendly and courteous and enjoy talking to visitors and volunteering information. They show respect for teachers, each other and the school environment. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying, sexism or racism. The pupils themselves confirmed that bullying is now rare at the school and they are confident that, should an incident occur, it will be dealt with effectively and promptly. As they get older, pupils mature, take their increasing responsibilities seriously and carry them out cheerfully. For example, pupils in Years 6 make crafts and sell them on their own stalls at parent teacher association fairs. They also show initiative when organising their own charity fundraising events and suggesting ways to improve the school which are discussed at school council.

13. The attendance rate for the last academic year was well below the national average, with unauthorised absences broadly in line with the national average. This low attendance rate has mostly been caused by a very small minority of parents who do not take their children's education seriously enough. However, since the school has implemented new procedures for applying for family holidays in term time there has been a slight improvement in the figures. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and all lessons start on time. Registers are completed efficiently at the beginning of each session.

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

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and has shown improvement since the previous inspection. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, in the last inspection it was 86 per cent. The proportion of lessons which were good or better has risen to 73 per cent; it was 28 per cent in the last inspection. Very good teaching was observed in eleven per cent of lessons. Teaching was good in English throughout the school. In mathematics and science it was satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teaching was good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

15. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching during a period when there has been significant staff turnover. Considerable efforts have been made to recruit appropriate staff and the school has been successful in recruiting teachers with a range of expertise and knowledge. At

present the school has one unqualified teacher. Both new and inexperienced staff are given good guidance and support. In responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting held for parents prior to the inspection parents were positive about the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of pupils' work together with lesson observations showed that teaching is best in Years 3 to 6. This is because teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use a wide range of effective teaching methods. These features help pupils maintain their enthusiasm and interest and develop their knowledge and understanding.

16. The lessons in which teaching was good or better were characterised by teachers planning activities that met the needs of all pupils and ensuring lessons were varied and interesting. For example, in English work is carefully planned to improve pupils' writing skills, particularly those of boys. Topics are covered which will appeal to them and the effectiveness of lessons is consistently reviewed and plans amended as necessary. In mathematics lessons where teaching was the most successful, work started at a brisk pace with challenging mental maths questions. Teachers checked skilfully pupils' recall and understanding of previously completed work through careful questioning. This ensured that pupils worked hard during lessons and time was used effectively. In the best science lessons, teachers developed pupils' interest and independence through the teaching of investigative and experimental skills. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on the melting points of solids, the teacher developed pupils' understanding of how to plan the practical activities through a whole-class discussion. Pupils then worked in groups deciding on the equipment needed and how to measure and record their results. This careful preparation led to pupils working hard throughout the lesson and being able to successfully carry out the investigation.

17. In all classes, teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well, including those who have emotional and behavioural problems. Because these pupils are effectively managed, their behaviour and inability to concentrate does not impact significantly on the learning of the rest of the class. In other successful lessons, good relationships ensured that pupils felt the confidence to ask questions and put forward ideas. For example, in an effective religious education lesson, pupils participated readily in discussion, sharing their experiences and listening to the views of others. Teachers plan to provide relevant first-hand experiences, which motivate pupils. For example, in history, a visit to Chatham Dockyard enabled pupils to visit a warship and listen to the poetry of sailors who served on the ship during the Second World War.

18. A number of strengths were seen in the teaching and learning in many lessons that were satisfactory or better. Teachers show interest and enthusiasm in lessons and this motivates pupils to work hard. They regularly evaluate how well pupils have understood new concepts and amend future plans if this proves necessary. A strength of teaching in many lessons is teachers' good use of a range of resources. For example, in an art and design lesson, the teacher used a range of digitally produced photographs to stimulate pupils' interest in developing designs for a clay tile. Pupils were shown a range of images, some of which had been changed using a computer. They discussed the differences and were then keen to use the images for their practical work.

19. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. In most classes, teachers structure their lessons carefully to ensure that pupils can concentrate and gain confidence. Reading, writing and handwriting are taught systematically. Literacy skills are well applied across the curriculum, for example in history and geography. Pupils' specialist vocabulary is well developed in a number of subjects, including science and ICT. Mathematical skills are taught effectively and satisfactorily applied in other areas of the curriculum, such as science. In some lessons, such as art and design and geography, teachers' planning effectively incorporated the use of ICT skills. However, overall there is insufficient planning for the use of ICT to support work across the curriculum.

20. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning for children is satisfactory. Basic skills in language and mathematics are taught systematically. Good use of opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening and personal and social skills is made. However, whilst lessons have a variety of activities, adults lead too much of the learning and there are too few opportunities for independent creative or imaginative play. This results in weaknesses in pupils' learning in areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

21. In other lessons where teaching had weaknesses, lessons often lacked pace and challenge. Teachers had not planned the work to meet the needs of all pupils and some pupils did not make enough progress. For example, in mathematics, teaching sometimes did not provide sufficient challenge for higher-attainers throughout the lesson. In a few lessons, pupils were asked to spend too long on one task or the teacher did not stop the lesson quickly enough when pupils experienced difficulties. As a result pupils lost concentration and became restless.

22. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. Teachers regularly set tasks, for example, they expect pupils to read, complete spellings and mathematics work at home. The quality of marking is satisfactory, although there are inconsistencies across the school. In some classes, detailed marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, whilst in others work is marked using a series of ticks with little or no comment.

23. Teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs is good. They are identified quickly and methods used to support them are appropriate and enable pupils to learn well. Good expectations for work and behavior have been established and pupils respond positively. Knowledgeable and well trained support assistants work well with teachers, focusing on those pupils who require individual help either at the times when the whole class works together, or in group-work. Small groups of pupils withdrawn from lessons for specific literacy or numeracy teaching make good progress in these special sessions, where the activities used, for example crosswords to improve spelling skills, readily engage their interest.

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

24. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all its pupils that include religious education and all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. Planning has improved since the last inspection through the use of nationally recommended schemes of work, which the school has adapted to meet the needs of its pupils. However, teaching time in Years 1 and 2 is below the nationally recommended minimum and the amount of time allocated to mathematics is low. Provision for ICT does not meet statutory requirements because of insufficient hardware and software to fully cover National Curriculum requirements. Nevertheless, other subjects throughout the school have been reorganised and are now given appropriate time and are taught in sufficient depth.

25. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established and the school has taken action to raise standards by introducing additional teaching groups for higher and lower-attaining pupils. For example, a weakness in writing has been identified and the school has introduced several imaginative approaches to stimulate interest. Booster lessons are having a positive effect on raising standards, although those provided after school are not always well attended. Sessions for higher-attaining pupils have provided them with suitably challenging work. Numeracy and literacy skills are developed and consolidated in subjects other than English and mathematics, such as in religious education where pupils write at length, re-telling stories they have heard. ICT is used to promote



learning in some subjects, notably mathematics where pupils use mathematics programs to reinforce and extend what they are learning in the lessons. The curriculum for children in the reception class is planned with a range of activities based on the national guidance. However, some areas receive less attention than others and children have insufficient opportunities to use their imagination to build up their creative skills and to develop their curiosity by exploration and investigation.

26. The curriculum provides good opportunities for learning to pupils with special educational needs. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers generally provide appropriate work for higher-attaining pupils, as well as care and support for those pupils who need extra help. This is clearly laid out in teachers' planning. The targets set in individual education plans help to focus pupils' development and they make good progress towards them. The needs of pupils who have statements of special educational need are met well, with care taken to follow the requirements set out in the provision. The requirements of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs have been fully implemented and a designated governor for special educational needs regularly visits the school to check on provision and progress.

27. The school makes good provision for teaching PSHE, including sex and drugs education. There are specialist lessons for sex education in Year 5 agreed by the parents and supported by the school nurse. The local community police officer visits the school to talk to the older pupils about the dangers of the misuse of drugs. Visits from other members of the community such as the fire service and the army support pupils learning.

28. A good range of visits enhance pupils' learning. This has included trips to the Maritime Museum, the National Gallery and the Tower of London. Year 5 pupils annual residential visit offers opportunities for learning in many subjects and adds significantly to their personal and social development. A number of parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school does not provide enough extra-curricular activities. At the present time, there are lunchtime recorder clubs and after school clubs for football, gymnastics, netball and craft all of which are well attended. The school takes part in competitive matches in football, netball and cricket, in which it is very successful. The inspection found that a satisfactory range of activities is provided, given the small size of the school.

29. Good links with many secondary schools ensure that pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their learning. These are extended by good curriculum links in ICT that have been established with one local secondary school. These links are helping to provide support for curriculum developments at Bean. The school benefits from close links with a local college and a teacher training college.

30. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school takes pupils' personal development seriously and staff work hard to promote pupils' self-esteem and social skills. The provision for their personal development is good overall, although multi-cultural provision remains weaker than other areas.

31. The provision for spiritual development is now good. Pupils are valued as individuals and they are encouraged to value others and respect the world in which they live. The religious education curriculum makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Through study of the world's major religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism pupils reflect on their own and others' beliefs. Assemblies provide moments for quiet reflection on issues relevant to pupils' lives. Citizenship lessons provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others' feelings.

32. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and is underpinned by the school's strong caring

ethos. The staff provide good role models for the pupils, in their relationships with one another, and the care they show for their pupils. Useful procedures for promoting good behaviour are implemented consistently and successfully and give pupils a secure understanding of right and wrong. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to consider how they should behave. In citizenship lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss moral issues. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils learnt about slavery and sensitively described how they would feel to be sold as a slave. School and class rules are shared and written by pupils, who show a growing responsibility for their own actions. Consideration for the feelings of other people is encouraged. Good work and behaviour are recognised and rewarded at the weekly sharing assembly.

33. The school is effective at promoting pupils' social development. In nearly all lessons opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and as members of a group. An appropriate range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to work together and to pursue their interests in an informal setting, while pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, presenting them with new challenges away from home. Teachers allocate duties to assist with the smooth running of classrooms, and pupils develop initiative through the school council which provides opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community.

34. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, although pupils continue to receive insufficient opportunities to experience the richness and diversity of a range of cultures. Pupils' awareness of their own culture is promoted well through visits. Pupils are provided with some knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of their own and other cultures through religious education lessons. Pupils have studied Islamic art with assistance from a visiting artist. However, too few opportunities are given to explore the work of a range of artists and composers or to sample a range of literature from other cultures.

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

35. The school continues to look after its pupils well. The school has a caring approach and staff get to know pupils and their families well. Pupils know who to see if hurt or feeling unwell and a good number of staff have received first aid training.

36. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective and the very small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties is supported well. Overall, the procedures are implemented consistently throughout the school and are understood by pupils, who both respect and value the systems of sanctions and rewards. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well, and other pupils' learning is not detrimentally affected. The school has effective procedures for dealing with any rare incidents of bullying and racism. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory overall. Procedures for sanctioning holidays during term time have improved. However, closer monitoring to enable early recognition of patterns of absence is needed in order to improve attendance levels.

37. The school pays good attention to the health and safety of its pupils. It has an effective health and safety policy with regular risk assessments taking place. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues are satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection the school did not have a child protection policy. This is now fully in place, however, not all staff have had recent training in this area, although this is planned.

38. Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved its assessment procedures. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are now good. Pupils'

progress is tracked in English and mathematics using nationally recognised tests and teacher assessments. The results of these assessments assist with target setting and grouping arrangements. Subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have undertaken a thorough analysis of the results of national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses highlighted in pupils' learning. Weaknesses identified are being effectively dealt with and this is leading to improvements in standards.

39. Monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress in class has improved since the last inspection. Good on-going assessment procedures help teachers and pupils to identify what has been learnt and areas that still need development. Opportunities are made for identified pupils to receive more support on various aspects of their work. Additional numeracy and literacy support is provided for some pupils identified through assessments.

40. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables staff to set targets and plan work and levels of support which are well matched to pupils' needs. Targets are shared with learning support assistants who liaise closely with the teachers and feedback their comments on pupil progress. Pupils' progress is also assisted through regular planned support and advice from other outside agencies.

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

41. Parents are generally happy with the care and education their children receive at the school, although some concerns were raised in the questionnaires over communication with parents.

42. The overall amount and quality of information available to parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well presented and contain all the required information. The school communicates new developments to parents through termly newsletters. However, consultation with parents on decisions over the future of the school and its work is currently unsatisfactory. Parents receive satisfactory information about their children's progress through the twice-yearly consultation evenings and the annual reports. The reports are satisfactory, although many do not include the next steps the pupil needs to take to raise his or her attainment. However, they do include appropriate information about the work pupils have covered as well as what the pupil understands and can do in all subjects.

43. The school encourages parental involvement on a day-to-day basis. The headteacher is always on the playground to greet pupils and their parents at the start of the day. Class teachers are available to meet with parents after school to discuss any concerns or queries. A few parents help around the school with activities such as reading and support in the library. The parent teacher association consists of a relatively small number of parents who work hard to arrange social and fundraising events for the school. These events are well attended both by parents and the local community. Most others give support for their children's education through attending consultation evenings and school productions, and listening to their children read at home. The home-school agreement is fully in place. Parents are very supportive of the school in practical terms. For example, contributing by giving their time and expertise to the recent building works around the school.

44. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about the school's provision for their children and are appreciative of the efforts the staff makes on their behalf. Parents know the targets that are set, and that there is a part for them to play at home in their child's individual education plan.

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

45. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and subject co-ordinators, provides good leadership and this has led to improving attainment and achievement by the pupils. Clear vision for development is evident and changes have been managed successfully. Management is good and enhanced by the good support from administrative staff. Staff monitor effectively pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the implementation of the subject policies. This was an area of weakness at the last inspection and has now been improved. The co-ordination of subjects is mainly good. The school has rightly prioritised certain subjects for development and the headteacher ensures teachers have some release time from their classes in order to carry out their management responsibilities.

46. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. A shared commitment to produce confident and well-rounded individuals is evident. This ethos is reflected in the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs is in place, which meets all statutory requirements. It is well organised and makes effective use of support staff and the advice of external agencies.

47. Governors are strongly committed to the school and most are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many, including the chairman, are frequent visitors and are well known to staff, parents and the children. The governing body is well organised with individual committees responsible for particular aspects of the school's performance. Their knowledge of the school is good and is underpinned by focussed visits by individuals. For example, the literacy and special educational needs governors, have visited to watch teaching and learning in the classrooms and other aspects of the school's work. Following a visit, an individual governor will produce a short written report for presentation at the next full meeting. Governors are involved in establishing priorities for the school improvement plan and are active in monitoring the progress made. With the staff they set challenging targets for improvement.

48. Governors are conscious of the need for training to help them discharge their responsibilities effectively and they regularly take advantage of sessions offered by the local education authority. They understand the Disability Discrimination Act and are carefully considering through their new accessibility plan how they can make adaptations to accommodate future pupils or adults with particular physical needs. Governors ensure that the school meets all of its statutory duties with the exception of teaching in ICT. Performance Management, linked to priorities in the school improvement plan, has been effective in helping to raise standards. It is at an early stage for support staff.

49. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, and taking action, are good. Pupils' progress is rigorously monitored by the headteacher and the outcomes analysed for strengths and weaknesses, comparing their performance with that of pupils in similar schools locally and nationally, and measuring the amount of value added improvement the school has provided. Effective use of the school's computer system is made in collecting and managing information about pupils' progress. However, pupils' attendance figures are not yet collected and analysed by computer and an insufficient number of modern computers are in place to enable the ICT curriculum to be taught effectively. Overall the school is effective in establishing appropriate priorities for development.

50. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning and appropriate use of specific grants. Financial procedures are very well monitored by the governors. Spending priorities in the school's comprehensive improvement plan are closely followed and have resulted, for example, in specific purchases of resources to improve particular curriculum areas such as literacy and geography. The school has a significant planned carry forward in its budget to finance the provision of

a computer room. Overall, the principles of best value are satisfactorily applied. The recommendations of the most recent local authority audit of financial procedures have been carried out.

51. Teaching staff have a good range of expertise and, with the support staff, continue to participate in structured training and development to improve their performance. Staff who are new to the school or inexperienced receive good support from their colleagues. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The building is generally well maintained and clean apart from toilet facilities which are inadequately ventilated. Parents and friends of the school in the local community have made a significant contribution to the maintenance of the building by providing materials and labour at a reduced cost. The school is currently investigating ways of improving the outdoor learning environment through the provision of large climbing apparatus. With the exception of ICT, resources for learning are generally satisfactory with some significant strengths in, for example, the library.

52. Since it was last inspected, leadership and management skills have developed and have been a contributory factor in the school's continuing improvement. Although the great majority of parents expressed positive or very positive views about the leadership and management in their questionnaire responses, approximately 25 per cent of respondents felt that communication with parents could be improved. Evidence gathered by the inspection team supports this view.

53. Staff are very well motivated and work very well as a team. They share a clear commitment to further raise standards and the school is well placed for further improvement.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) improve the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils in some lessons:
  - monitoring teaching and learning, identifying and sharing good practice and taking action to resolve any weaknesses;
  - improving the consistency of marking;
  - developing more precise group and individual targets for pupils;
  - regularly evaluating the success of initiatives to raise pupils' attainment and adapting them as necessary.
  - (*7, 21-2, 64, 69, 72, 75-6*)
  
- (2) improve pupils' attainment in ICT, as planned, by:
  - improving the quantity and quality of resources to enable the systematic teaching of all aspects required by the National Curriculum;
  - improving the amount and quality of ICT work that pupils do to support other subjects;
  - continuing staff training so that they can teach the subject confidently;
  - monitoring standards of attainment across the school closely so that improvements in pupils' achievements can be measured.(*8, 19, 24, 48-9, 51, 69, 80, 88-9, 97, 99-104*)
  
- (3) improve the attendance of those pupils who are often absent from school by:
  - continuing the range of initiatives that are in place;
  - closer monitoring and early recognition of patterns of absence.
  - (*13, 49, 64, 73, 81*)
  
- (4) increase in the amount of curriculum time in Years 1 and 2 which is below the nationally recommended minimum, together with the proportion of time allocated to mathematics.  
(*24, 72*)

*(The numbers in italics show the main paragraphs in which these issues are discussed in the report.)*

55. The report also identifies some other issues which governors may wish to include in the action plan to be developed following this inspection. They include:

- improving aspects of the foundation stage curriculum – *2, 20, 25, 57, 61, 63*
- increasing consultation with parents about proposed changes – *42, 52*
- improving provision for multi-cultural education – *34*

- updating staff training on child protection issues – 37
- improving ventilation in toilet facilities - 51
- further improving the quality of reports, to indicate the next steps that pupils need to take to raise their attainment – 42

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	23	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	11	62	27	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### ***Attendance***

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	24	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (93)	86 (97)	93 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	25	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	93 (90)	86 (90)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	11
	Girls	13	9	15
	Total	20	18	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (73)	62 (63)	90 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	12
	Girls	12	11	15
	Total	19	21	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (67)	72 (67)	93 (73)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	174	5	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	442,668
Total expenditure	447,341
Expenditure per pupil	2,259
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,156

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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	191
Number of questionnaires returned	39

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	62	10	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	13	3	8
The teaching is good.	49	46	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	54	21	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	44	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	33	10	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	54	21	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	38	41	13	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	49	23	3	5

\* Some figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

### **Other issues raised by parents**

At the meeting held prior to the inspection parents were positive about the attitudes and values promoted by the school. However, parents were not positive about the quality and level of communication and the quality and amount of homework.

## **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**

56. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children attend school part time for half a term before they start full time. At the time of the inspection, the older children have been in school all day for half a term and the younger children have just started full time education. Most of them have little pre-school experience and come in with below average skills and knowledge in all areas. They make good progress particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. About three-quarters of them are in line to attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they go into Year 1. Through careful observations, the teacher assesses each child's particular needs. As a result, children who have particular difficulties are identified early and given good support.

57. The curriculum includes a range of activities that cover all areas of learning for children of this age. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is satisfactory or good in most areas of learning. However, it is unsatisfactory in the areas of creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Whole class sessions are lively and interesting and basic skills in language and mathematics are taught systematically. The staff make good use of opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening and personal and social skills. They are aware of children's ability to concentrate, and although some sessions are long, they are well balanced with a variety of activities. However, they do not provide the best balance of whole-class and chosen activities that is most relevant for children of this age. In most lessons observed, adults led the learning and there were too few opportunities for independent creative or imaginative play. The classroom lacks excitement and play areas are not stimulating. As a result, whilst most aspects of children's development are catered for, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development receive too little emphasis. Nevertheless, children's achievements are sound during their time in the reception class.

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

58. From the time they start school a particular emphasis is given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are given a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave and as a result they make good progress with this area of learning. Most are confident, interested and keen to learn and show enthusiasm for all activities. They settle into school routines and are very happy. For example, when the teacher says she has set the timer, there is a buzz of activity as children tidy away their equipment. They all put the things away quickly and sensibly and try to be ready before the timer goes off. Children have good relationships with each other and with adults. They concentrate, co-operate with each other, take turns, share and work and play together.

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

59. Provision for language development is good. Children listen attentively to stories and most speak confidently and clearly. When sitting in groups or as a class, they are able to join in with discussions and listen appreciatively to others. They are beginning to write, and some apply knowledge of sounds to their writing and write their own names clearly. All the children know about books and how to use them. Some of the older children have made a good start at reading simple texts and they take their

books home to read to their parents. Phonics is consistently well taught so the children make good progress in reading. They are keen to learn letter sounds and shapes and in lessons they are enthusiastic and keen to take part. When children were engaged in independent activities there were good examples of them practising their new skills. For example, one child sat quietly tracing his finger over the letters whilst sounding them to himself.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Children learn to count and recognise some numerals and name two-dimensional shapes. There is a wide range of ability, and as a result in whole-class lessons, work can be hard for some and easy for others. However, they all join in counting with the teacher and the more confident lead the lower-attainers. The practical activities provide opportunities for developing children's concept of size and shape. For example, children were able to talk about the relative size of the objects they had made with the bricks. The teacher reinforces counting and number recognition in other activities, such as in a physical education lesson where children grouped themselves according to the given number. Overall, children make satisfactory progress towards this early learning goal.

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

61. The provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is unsatisfactory. Children learn how to use computers with appropriate programs and are becoming confident when using the mouse and keyboard. They build with a wide range of bricks and talk about their constructions, but do not have the opportunity to select materials and tools to make their own models. Children have too few opportunities to develop their curiosity by exploration and investigation. For example, there are no collections of plants or natural objects for children to look at. Planning shows that other aspects of this area of learning will be covered later in the school year.

### **Physical development**

62. Children's physical development is sound and they are provided with an appropriate range of activities to enable their co-ordination to improve. The outdoor area is small and, although children ride a variety of wheeled toys, there are no facilities for climbing or balancing. However, the hall is used well and lessons are carefully planned to develop not only physical skills, but also other aspects of the curriculum. For example, in a dance lesson, children went on from moving about the room, changing speed and pathways to the music, to creating patterns on paper inspired by the same music. They were all engrossed in the activity and moved confidently and imaginatively and made good use of the space. Children can hold a pencil with control, but the pens they use on their white boards are too big for some of them to be able to hold and use effectively.

### **Creative development**

63. Overall, children's achievements are unsatisfactory in this area of learning and attainment is lower than nationally expected. Children are not given enough opportunities to paint and draw freely. Little of their work is displayed and limits the opportunities for them to see the results of their creative efforts. They sing and join in action songs. They follow the teacher's signals to sing loudly or quietly and enjoy performing to others in the class. However, there is no ready access to a range of musical instruments or constant opportunities for art activities which would help children to use their imagination and build up their creative skills.

## ENGLISH

64. Results in the national tests have fluctuated since the last inspection. In 2002, results at the end of Year 2 in both reading and writing were below those found nationally and well below average when compared with those of similar schools. The year group had a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in writing was below the national average and well below the national average in reading. This depressed the school's performance. Results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average and well below those of schools of a similar type. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 equalled the national average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2 results were above average. Boys performed less well than the girls. Test results are affected by pupils who join the school after the normal admission date. Some of these pupils have erratic patterns of attendance and this has a negative impact on the standards they attain. Analysis of the results of those pupils who were at the school at the start of Year 3 and took the national test at the end of Year 6 indicate that overall they achieved well.

65. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of work in Year 2 has improved and is broadly in line with the national expectation. Standards are higher than previous year's test results for a number of reasons. For example, teaching has improved and more emphasis is being placed on acquiring good writing skills. Strategies have been put in place to raise standards as a result of analysis of pupils' results and identifying particular problems that pupils have had. The school has improved resources for reading by the purchase of additional books, and especially those which appeal to boys, for school and class libraries.

66. Considering pupils' prior levels of attainment the achievement of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 is good. This is a result of good teaching. Reading is systematically taught, helping pupils to use letter sounds and the use of clues in the text to enable them to tackle new words. Some pupils already have a wide knowledge of vocabulary, which they use to good effect in recognising unfamiliar words, and all are taught from the time they enter the school to use a combination of ways to read them. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils responded with enthusiasm to the challenge of learning about the 'ow' and 'ou' sound and quickly learnt to use this knowledge in reading a list of words provided by the teacher. Interest in reading is stimulated by the use of a range of stories and texts, which teach pupils about punctuation, sentence structure and the ways in which stories are constructed. Pupils understand the idea of story settings and use their knowledge to predict what may happen in the story. By Year 2, average and higher-attaining pupils read competently, many with good expression, a range of stories from reading scheme books and from their class libraries. They talk enthusiastically about books and view them as something to be enjoyed, both at home and school. Pupils with special educational needs are also encouraged to enjoy books and reading from the time they enter school and by Year 2 they achieve well. Handwriting is systematically taught and teachers provide pupils with a variety of opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than English. In history, for example, pupils' unaided writing about Florence Nightingale ranged from simple sentences to describe pictures by lower-attaining pupils to several neat pages of descriptive writing by higher-attainers. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to express themselves clearly, to use a range of vocabulary and to listen carefully to the views of others so that their ability to speak and listen competently is consistently developed.

67. In Year 6, standards of work show improvement and are currently in line with national expectations. Standards are higher than previous test results because the school identifies successfully

particular pupils who are not performing as well as they might and provides them with additional help. Recorded work shows that higher-attaining pupils can set out an argument that reflects the points for and against a proposal and write a reasoned conclusion, while lower-attaining pupils can do so using a prompts provided by the teacher. Most pupils write sensitively, using and understanding a range of writing conventions such as alliteration. In Year 5, for example, pupils were taught how to construct a Japanese Haiku poem and understood that the number of words and lines were intentionally minimal in order to stimulate the imagination of the reader. Their own efforts demonstrated a secure grasp of this idea. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were taught note-taking skills, identifying key words and ideas, and these skills are used to good effect in other subjects. Most write fluently and neatly in pen but a few still have difficulties in forming their letters accurately and producing consistently accurate punctuation. Pupils' interest in books and reading continues to develop as they move up the school. They are encouraged to read a wide range of texts from class and school libraries, and to bring their own books from home. When reading to inspectors, most showed enthusiasm and a good understanding of the text. Most read fluently, tackling unfamiliar words with a range of methods, and with good expression. While most were able to talk about favourite authors and knew how to find their books in the school library, few understood the method for finding non-fiction using the Dewey classification. Homework is sensibly used to consolidate work in class through the learning of spellings and reading at home, and parents are encouraged to support this through the use of a reading diary.

68. The standard of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as a result. This is an improvement on the last inspection when teaching was found to be satisfactory and pupils' made average progress. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to cater for pupils' different levels of attainment and adapt the plans when previous learning has not been as successful as they intended. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher realised that pupils were having difficulty in completing planned work which required them to assemble arguments for and against a proposal. As a result the following week's plans were reviewed to enable her to teach this specific skill. Teachers' good subject knowledge is also a factor in the quality of teaching. One teacher was able to go into some detail on its form and purpose when teaching pupils about Japanese Haiku poetry. As a result all pupils achieved pleasing results when composing their own poems. Teachers make good use of assessment information to support pupils' learning. Most older pupils know their own level of attainment and what they need to do to improve their writing. They have group or individual targets for improvement, although there is some inconsistency in the way staff use them. Support staff work closely with teachers. They are well briefed about their role with individuals or groups and carry this out effectively, ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the work of the class. Support staff have a good knowledge of pupils' individual targets, and have the pupils' individual education plans available for reference while they are working with them.

69. A particular strength of the school's teaching results from the carefully planned efforts to engage the interest of boys in order to improve their writing skills. Teachers have adapted the curriculum to ensure that older boys are studying topics that will most appeal to them. Positive role models – including a policeman, fireman and a soldier - have also been used to encourage the idea that reading and books are something in which males should be interested. Opportunities for writing are deliberately created when planning work in other subjects, particularly history, so that pupils can apply their writing skills to practical purposes. When teaching was less effective it was because the pace of the lesson dropped, or when pupils needed to move on to a different task, and some pupils became restless as a result. The use of ICT enables pupils to present their writing, particularly poetry, attractively. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to produce writing for different purposes, for example, brochures to advertise a particular cause, using desktop publishing software.

70. The school is well resourced and has a wide selection of books in good condition. The library is



well stocked and managed by two volunteer parents. Pupils have a regular library lesson to select books to borrow for home reading. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Together with other staff, she has analysed recent test results to identify aspects of the subject where teaching and learning have been less effective and has an action plan to improve these. The governor with responsibility for literacy monitors the progress being made, has spent time in lessons and discussed progress with the co-ordinator. As a result the governing body has a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved over the last four years and, despite the slight drop in 2002, are in line with national trends. In 2002 they were below the national average and well below average when compared with the results of similar schools. The year group had a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and this had an impact on results. Although an average proportion of pupils attained the expected Level 2, very few pupils reached the higher Level 3 which depressed the school's performance.

72. Standards seen during the inspection are similar to the test results. Attainment is below expectations because of the small number of pupils working towards Level 3. When pupils begin school they have very little mathematical experience and when they start in Year 1 some still have difficulty in counting objects accurately beyond seven. However, teachers' expectations are often too low for the higher-attaining pupils and work is not always sufficiently challenging. Currently too little time is given to the teaching of mathematics and this also depresses standards. Overall, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

73. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over the past four years. In 2002 they were better than the previous year but still below the national average when compared with schools nationally and well below when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils that achieved the higher Level 5 was in line with the national average but too few pupils attained the required Level 4. For the last two years boys performed better than girls. A number of factors have had an adverse effect on standards. Test results are affected by pupils who join the school after the normal admission date. Some of these pupils have erratic patterns of attendance and this has a negative impact on the standards they attain. Comparison with their results at the end of Year 2, shows that pupils have achieved well. The lessons observed and the work completed so far this year, would indicate that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are working at the expected levels. The suitable emphasis on learning multiplication tables and mental calculations helps pupils complete a good amount of work in lessons. A significant number of the older pupils are working at a higher level and achieving well. They apply the skills they have learnt well for investigation and to solve number problems and explain the methods they use. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving particularly well because of the help they have in lessons.

74. A range of strategies have been put in place to raise standards as a result of analysis of pupils' results and identifying particular problems that pupils have had. Booster lessons are having a positive effect on raising standards, although those provided after school are not always well attended. Sessions for higher-attaining pupils have provided challenging work and they are confident when finding patterns and relationships between numbers and shapes and discussing the reasoning for their work. For example, they calculate angles between parallel lines from a given angle.

75. Overall, the teaching observed was satisfactory, and good in Years 3 to 6. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers make good use of a range of books and materials to support it. In the best lessons, oral and mental questions at the beginning are brisk and

increasingly challenging. However, in some lessons this warm up is insufficiently stimulating, or is omitted. At the start of the lesson, teachers explain what pupils are expected to learn and through probing and open-ended questions encourage them to recall previous learning. Each lesson ends with a plenary session which reinforces learning and assesses pupils' understanding. Good use is made of this when planning the next lessons, taking into account the needs of the pupils and their rate of learning. Teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. Pupils are encouraged to talk to each other about their work. This uses the time most efficiently as all pupils are involved. As a result, pupils make good use of the vocabulary they have learnt when discussing their work. Lively and informative displays in classrooms reinforce vocabulary and pose questions and challenges relevant to the current work. In most lessons, pace is good. The teachers build up from what the pupils know and understand to introduce more challenging work. In some lessons, where the pace is slow or the pupils have to listen to long explanations, they lose interest and their attention wanders.

76. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. Their support and praise for pupils' achievement in lessons provide additional motivation for them and pupils respond by working hard and with interest. Teachers plan with support staff who are fully involved and effective in supporting groups and individuals. Marking is not consistent. The best marking has constructive comments, mistakes are corrected and praise used appropriately. Although work is generally marked, some simply indicates what is and is not right and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to make use of marking to improve their work. Pupils use their numeracy skills in some other subjects, such as to record results in graphs and tables in science. ICT is used in the teaching of numeracy and computers are used for mathematics programs in most classes.

77. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues effectively through staff meetings and training days. The introduction of the Numeracy Strategy has provided a good structure for both teaching and learning which was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Numeracy is the current focus for improvement. The careful tracking of pupils' progress, analysis of test results and the appropriate action taken has resulted in an improvement in teaching and standards. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **SCIENCE**

78. In 2002, results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 found attainment to be below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching both the expected level 2 and the higher level 3 was found to be below average. When compared with similar schools results were well below average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have shown improvement since the previous inspection, although there has been considerable year-to-year fluctuation. A high point was reached in 2000, however, in the 2001 national tests results declined. In 2002, results improved considerably and were in line with the national average, but below those of schools of a similar type. The number of pupils who attained higher levels was average when compared to national figures but below those of similar schools. However, when compared to pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2, results are well above average indicating that pupils achieved very well. Girls performed better than boys in the tests.

79. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of pupils' work in Year 2 has improved and is now broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' written work, for example, shows that they know and record clearly what happens when materials such as chocolate and water are heated and cooled. Results of investigations are recorded using simple tables. Pupils develop their understanding of how to carry out an investigation by considering questions such as "what do I want to find out? How am I going to do it?", and "what do I need?" In lessons, the responses of higher-attaining pupils show that

they are exceeding the expected level. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, a number of pupils showed a good understanding of how to make a test fair when planning an investigation to determine if a toy railway truck would travel further with or without a load. Many pupils in the class could say what they thought would happen. Most displayed a secure knowledge of vocabulary associated with scientific investigation. Good questioning by the teacher, together with consistent encouragement during discussion enabled all pupils to develop their understanding of how to devise a fair test.

80. In Year 6, attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils' recorded work throughout Years 3 to 6 shows that there is satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum. They regularly carry out practical investigations and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils record results using tables and bar charts well, however, insufficient consideration is given to other methods of presenting results, such as line graphs. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science is currently unsatisfactory throughout the school. However, the use of new equipment such as sensors and microscopes, which can be linked to computers, is starting. Pupils' written work shows that they have a good understanding of how to construct electrical circuits, in series and in parallel. They are able to draw a range of electrical components using the correct symbols and understand terms such as *filament*. Pupils understand what constitutes a fair test. Pupils are able to plan how they will undertake an investigation, such as determining what happens to the size of a shadow as a light source is moved away from an object. Higher-attaining pupils are able to select appropriate equipment and make accurate measurements when completing practical activities.

81. When pupils start Year 1, they have below average skills in some areas of learning. Considering pupils' prior levels of attainment, their achievement in science is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. No significant differences were observed between the achievements of boys and girls. A number of factors have had an adverse effect on standards. Test results are affected by pupils who join the school after the normal admission date. Some of these pupils have erratic patterns of attendance and this has a negative impact on the standards they attain. Analysis of the results of pupils who were at the school at the start of Year 3 and took the national test at the end of Year 6 indicate that overall they achieved well. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and also achieve well. Recent improvement in standards has been brought about systematic monitoring of pupils' books and lessons and detailed analysis of test results. This has identified strengths and weaknesses and appropriate action has been taken to improve aspects of the science curriculum.

82. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with a number of strengths. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. In a significant proportion of lessons observed teaching was good. All teachers follow the scheme of work and this ensures that work consistently builds upon knowledge previously gained. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. A strength is teachers' subject knowledge and there is now an appropriate emphasis on teaching investigative and experimental skills throughout the school. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the start and reviewed at the end. Teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Good use is made of support staff and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Where teaching is most effective, activities are planned in detail, after teachers have carefully evaluated pupils' progress during the previous lesson. Teachers use a range of teaching methods and careful questioning to check pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were asked to recall aspects of previous investigations they had carried out. The information was then used effectively by the teacher to lead a discussion on how pupils would undertake practical activities. They were then asked to plan an investigation into the melting points of various solids. In groups, pupils discussed the equipment needed and how they would record their results. This careful preparation led to pupils having enough information to plan and work with some degree of independence.

83. Teachers have high expectations and encourage the use of specialist vocabulary. Notes, together with the planning and results of investigations are recorded systematically in pupils' books. Pupils' numeracy skills are well applied in science lessons, for example, ensuring pupils calculate time intervals when recording results. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well, including those with emotional and behavioural problems. Because these pupils are effectively managed, their behaviour does not significantly affect the learning of the rest of the class. Work is regularly marked, and in some classes teachers write useful comments which help pupils improve their work. Where there were some weaknesses in lessons, these related to teachers not stopping practical activities quickly enough when it was clear that pupils were experiencing difficulties, and this slowed the rate of learning.

84. Leadership and management of the subject are now good. The co-ordinator has analysed test results to identify strengths and weaknesses and taken appropriate action to bring about improvement. New assessment procedures to track pupils' progress, together with a systematic monitoring programme have been implemented. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

85. Pupils' achievements in art and design are satisfactory, and similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 match national expectations, and there are some examples of higher quality work.

86. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a variety of materials for a range of activities. Collages using materials such as beads, fabric, paper and plastic by pupils in Year 2 are of good quality. Pencil drawings in the style of LS Lowry show how pupils have observed detail and included this in their own work to good effect. Pupils' paintings of underwater scenes show that there is satisfactory development of the skills of colour mixing and blending. Some use of sketchbooks is made, for example, for observational drawings. Currently, Year 2 pupils are making clay tiles depicting scenes from Bluewater, the local retail park. Working from photographs, their work again shows good attention to detail. Pupils are also using a graphics package on the computer to create drawings in the style of Mondrian. A visiting specialist has enabled pupils in a number of classes to complete some interesting work. In Years 3 and 4 pupils looked at Roman masks and then designed and made their own in clay. Islamic art was studied in Year 6, and pupils produced interesting tile designs. Pupils also used the Internet to investigate the purpose of masks across the world and drew masks from Greek theatre, Mardi Gras and gas masks from the Second World War. Links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils have completed pencil drawings of shoes and slippers. This work is now being developed in design and technology through the design and making of slippers. Although some use of sketchbooks is evident throughout the school, this is not consistent between classes.

87. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good. A good feature of lessons was the clear learning objectives, shared with the pupils, which enabled them to have a good understanding of what had to be completed. Teachers also used interesting resources, such as digital photographs, to good effect. In one lesson the pace was slowed as pupils experienced difficulty manipulating the clay which was not of a suitable consistency to roll into a flat tile

88. The curriculum is based on a nationally recommended scheme of work, and teachers are using this guidance to ensure that pupils' experience a wide variety of materials and techniques. Art and design makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. In some classes, pupils use ICT appropriately to make pictures and undertake research but pupils have insufficient access to equipment. Organisation of the subject across the school is satisfactory. Priorities for future development focus appropriately on raising aspects of pupils' attainment. As the expertise of the staff

continues to develop, the school is in a good position to raise standards further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Standards in design and technology are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, most pupils are working at levels that are in line with those expected for their ages. The school is following the nationally recommended scheme of work and this ensures that National Curriculum requirements are covered. It has been recognised that the use of ICT within the subject, for example, for control technology applications is a weakness.

90. Pupils develop their skills using a variety of materials such as card, food and textiles. In Year 2 they designed and made wheeled vehicles to carry eggs for an Easter bunny. Textiles were used in the design and making of hand puppets. Pupils listed the materials needed and produced annotated sketches of their designs. After making the puppets they considered how successful they had been. Work in design and technology is linked well to other areas of the curriculum. For example, in art when Year 6 pupils completed detailed observational drawings of slippers before drawing them formally using side and plan elevations. Pupils evaluated commercially produced slippers and then designed and made their own. They showed some understanding of the need to modify designs in order to achieve a well-made product.

91. Completed work, together with the lesson observed, indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' design work is well presented and their practical work is of a satisfactory standard. However, pupils' design and evaluation skills are not systematically developed in Years 3 to 6. In the Year 1 lesson observed, the teacher developed pupils' specialist vocabulary well using words such as, *lever* and *pivot*. Pupils showed a good understanding of how to make the parts of *Barnaby Bear* move using a simple mechanism constructed from split pins and string. They also remembered important practical points, such as the need to reinforce the paper template being used. The teacher used opportunities well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, encouraging them to develop their design ideas through discussion. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Advice and support has been provided for staff, by the co-ordinator. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. No lessons were observed during the inspection but the work seen throughout the school shows standards of attainment to be in line with those expected nationally, and pupils achieve well. In Years 1 and 2, standards of pupils' written work are in line with national expectations. In Year 2 children learn about St Lucia, a country in a contrasting part of the world. They write about the different jobs and food that people have there and they can find and mark The United Kingdom and St Lucia on a map of the world. Their work is presented to a good standard. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' attainment is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 confidently download maps and information about rivers from the

Internet. They study their village and compare it with a different locality such as Dover. Pupils are able to follow a town plan to find places such as hospitals and the police station, and competently note the differences and similarities of the two areas. A particularly effective study takes place in Years 3 and 4 where the younger pupils monitor the weather in school, taking daily temperature readings and forecasting the next day's weather. Older pupils download satellite photographs from the Internet showing the weather in different parts of the world for comparison. Pupils also use computers to produce simple graphs of population statistics and to research the history of the names of local villages on the Internet. Pupils in Year 3 have also communicated by e-mail with a school visitor from Africa to question him on the weather there.

93. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of places in this country and abroad. They learn how to read maps and to use correct geographical vocabulary, for example, terms associated with their river study such as *confluence*, *floodplain* and *estuary*. Good use is made of the locality to bring the subject to life, such as a planned visit to Dover. Teachers are beginning to include opportunities to extend children's learning in other curriculum areas through the geography curriculum, for example, pupils write letters asking for information.

94. The subject is led and managed by an enthusiastic new co-ordinator. She has already prepared an action plan, attended appropriate in-service training and improved resources by purchasing new maps and atlases. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is planned. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

95. It was not possible to observe teaching during the inspection and judgements were made by looking at pupils' work and discussion with staff. Pupils' achievements are good as they move through the school because of the quality of teachers planning and because the curriculum includes many first-hand experiences that bring the subject to life and motivate the pupils. As a result, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is above average, both in pupils' factual knowledge and in the skills they acquire in using and interpreting historical evidence. Pupils with special educational needs are often achieving average standards, due to support and the richness of learning opportunities.

96. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study a range of topics, including toys, exploring the life of Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. Good features of this work are the way in which pupils have compared life in the past with the present day, such as changes in the quality of hospitals, and the way they are encouraged to understand how people of the time felt about the events as they happened. A brief study of Samuel Pepys, for example, led to children writing diary entries as though they were experiencing The Great Fire of London at first hand. Pupils' work shows a good factual knowledge of the topics and growing skills in using historical evidence. By Year 4, pupils' work covers more complex issues arising from their historical study. They consider, for example, the position of girls and women in Ancient Greece and suggest that their education was inferior to that of boys to prevent them voting against war. Pupils learn to evaluate the quality of evidence and state whether it is weak or strong, or simply not enough. In Year 6, pupils make good progress when studying the Second World War. A range of artefacts such as uniforms, gas masks and letters written at the time is available for them to use. Their writing demonstrates good factual knowledge and a developing understanding of what life would have been like through such activities as writing letters home from an imaginary soldier.

97. Teachers' planning has many strong features. They use the subject effectively to develop pupils' writing skills and visits and visitors are used to bring the subject to life. A visit to Chatham Dockyard

was particularly successful as it enabled pupils to acquire first hand experience of a warship and of poetry written by sailors who served in it during the war. They used a visiting artist to help pupils make clay masks in connection with their studies of the Romans and Greeks. Pupils in Year 1, are helped in their study of toys through a visit to the Bethnal Green Toy Museum, while those in Year 5 visit The Ragged School to help them understand life for children in Victorian times. Opportunities for children of all abilities to write about the subject, as opposed to the excessive use of worksheets, are particularly good. Currently there is little use of ICT due to a lack of resources.

98. Management of the subject is good because the co-ordinator has a secure grasp of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning through frequent monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work. She has a clear action plan for improvement and is systematically improving resources for the subject. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

99. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is below national expectations. Whilst pupils reach the required standard in some aspects of ICT such as word processing, data handling and graphics, they have limited experiences in using ICT to control events or in using simulations to make decisions. Similar weaknesses were also noted at the last inspection. The last inspection judged attainment to be below national expectations in Years 1 and 2 and in line with expectations in Years 3 to 6, and improvement has been unsatisfactory since then. Overall, therefore, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory across the school because they do not cover some aspects of the required curriculum. The school is well aware of these weaknesses, and recent improvements in resources, the planned curriculum and staff expertise are beginning to raise standards.

100. By Year 2, most pupils run programs successfully, use the mouse and keyboard correctly, save their work to disk, and print their work. They have the expected computer operating skills although there are too few opportunities for them to use equipment and programs autonomously. Pupils word process short pieces of text, and they can use a simple graphics program to create designs in the style of Mondrian, linked to work in art and design. They have learned how to give instructions to a programmable toy so that it follows a simple route. Teachers also use ICT well to support pupils' work in literacy and numeracy.

101. Pupils' work in Year 6 shows evidence of use of the Internet, for example, to find information on World War Two, for history, and information on masks, for art and design. Year 6 pupils develop skills in word processing, combining text and pictures, and cutting, copying and pasting. These skills help them present their work appropriately. They have had satisfactory experience of data handling during Years 3 to 6, such as searching databases for information on sea animals in Year 3. In Year 6, pupils sort and analyse data they have collected, and then produce graphs to illustrate the information. However, there are weaknesses in other areas. For example, no work has been done using ICT to control events or to measure such things as time and temperature. In these areas, attainment is well below that expected.

102. One of the main reasons that work in some aspects of ICT has not been covered is a lack of resources. Each class has only two or three computers, expenditure on equipment has been low and the number of computers in the school is lower than average. Some of the computers are old, and cannot run modern programs. The school has three laptop computers and two data projectors. During the inspection these were seen being used effectively for the introduction of new skills. However, they cannot always be used for class teaching because the laptops do not have some of the necessary

programs. This makes the teaching of whole-class ICT lessons very difficult. Plans are well under way for the development of a new ICT suite, which should be in operation later this year.

103. Staff have received some training. However, not all staff are confident in all of the aspects of ICT which need to be taught. Further training, when the new facilities and resources become available, will be a key priority to ensure that all aspects of the planned curriculum are taught. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. In one lesson, effective use was made of the data projector for work with the whole-class. The teacher checked pupils' recall of their use of a graphics program, and introduced new skills. In another lesson, where it was not possible to use a data projector, the teacher effectively demonstrated and discussed the use of a database and compared the time taken by the computer to find information to manual methods. In all lessons, systematic instruction and good development of specialist vocabulary, such as, *field*, *text box*, *flood*, *fill* and *cell* enabled pupils to make progress. However, the rate of progress is slowed by pupils having to wait for considerable periods of time for access to a machine in order to apply what they have learnt.

104. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work that provides a good basis for teaching and learning. Considerable improvement in the organisation of the subject across the school has taken place recently. The co-ordinator has good personal expertise and is leading the subject well. She has used a consultant to support her work, and developed useful links with a Beacon school and a local secondary school. Effective monitoring of both teaching and work has taken place, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Consequently the co-ordinator has a clear view of where improvements need to be made in order to raise standards, and has set these out in a good quality action plan. New resources, such as printers, digital cameras, scanners and sensing equipment have been purchased. These improvements are starting to support pupils' learning in ICT, and the school is now in a better position to raise pupils' attainment. Some good use of ICT to support work in other subjects was seen during the inspection, for example the downloading of satellite pictures of weather in Year 4 geography, however, this is not yet planned systematically enough in all subjects.

## MUSIC

105. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Their overall achievement is good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing tunefully and follow the teacher's direction to sing loudly and softly. They have a good repertoire of songs to which they know the words and accompanying actions. Pupils enjoy singing and learn new songs quickly. By the end of Year 6 they compose short passages playing percussion instruments to create contrasting sounds and to convey different moods. They follow a graphic score and direction from their group leader when presenting a performance to the class. Standards in whole-school music have improved since the last inspection because class lessons are taken by a music specialist.

106. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection. All were taken by the same specialist teacher. Lessons are well planned with the class teachers who are also involved in the practical activities. The quality of teaching and learning was all good or better. Singing skills are developed well by teaching pupils to repeat phrases sung by the teacher. Very good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' performance are also teaching strengths. The good pace of the lessons maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm and pupils concentrate well and enjoy the work. Pupils' recall of previously completed work is checked and musical vocabulary reinforced through good questioning. For example, Year 6 pupils were told the correct musical terms for contrasting sounds. They understand terminology such as rhythm, beat and dynamics which they apply when composing their own music.



107. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has updated the policy, which is based on national guidelines, and is constantly reviewing it by introducing new songs that link with other subjects. She runs two recorder groups and encourages pupils to have instrumental lessons. She organises school musical productions and visiting groups. The school's participation in local music festivals is well supported by pupils and parents. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

108. In the lessons observed, pupils worked at levels which were in line with those expected for their ages and pupils made satisfactory progress. Good use of support staff ensured that pupils with special educational needs were fully included in lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils warm up correctly for lessons so that they are out of breath and also know about the effect of exercise on the heart and the need to stretch muscles to avoid strains. Teachers and support staff are very aware of safety issues and the lessons take place in a calm controlled manner.

109. Pupils follow instructions well and generally work hard at creative aspects of their work, displaying a progressive level of skill as they move through the school. In Year 1, for example, they become very involved in moving in time to music and do so imaginatively. Older pupils in Year 4 are able to demonstrate different moods through movement and co-operate well with each other to develop the work into short sequences. In Year 5, pupils are becoming adept at creating short sequences of movement linked to music emphasising, for example, the eighth beat of a phrase with a variety of jumps. In a Year 4 lesson, those pupils who were unable to participate actively were involved through being asked to evaluate the efforts of others. Good links with literacy are made for the younger children through basing their work on a well-known story. In Year 3, pupils displayed sound balancing skills on gymnastics apparatus, changing directions and linking their movements in simple sequences. They demonstrated good social skills by taking turns.

110. The curriculum is well planned and is complemented by a range of additional opportunities for older pupils. Pupils have swimming lessons in Year 4 and are successful in achieving the expected target of swimming 25 metres, with many of them able to swim considerably further and achieve certificates in water survival. Staff are well qualified and together with visiting teachers from Charlton Football Club and Kent County Cricket Club they enable pupils to achieve a good standard in netball, football and gymnastics during extra curricular activities, and to compete successfully against other schools in local competitions.

111. The subject is well managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator who is well qualified and has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has ensured that resources are adequate and safely stored and has made good use of advice from the local education authority's adviser. Her knowledge of staff skills is good and she has an appropriate plan for developing these in the coming year. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

112. Attainment in all year groups is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. They receive a good grounding in Christianity and the principal beliefs and festivals of the main world faiths. The lessons seen and the work in pupils' books show that a good range of moral and social issues are discussed as well as matters of faith. Pupils are encouraged to think about personal beliefs and relationships at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. Year 4 pupils

talked about the probable feelings of people in the crowd on Palm Sunday and related it to occasions when they had been in a crowd and felt happy and excited. They could recall many stories of miracles in the life of Jesus. Pupils in Year 6 have compared Old and New Testament stories. From the story of Abraham they have compared Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Pupils know about holy books, the festivals celebrated throughout the year and traditions of different faiths. These themes are linked to experiences in their own lives. They have visited the local church but have not, as yet, visited a Gurdwara even though they have added Sikhism to their recommended studies because of its relevance to the local area.

113. Only two lessons were seen so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching across the school. In both lessons there were good discussions between the teacher and the class. Good questioning encouraged more and more pupils to volunteer answers. Pupils were also given the opportunity to discuss their ideas with each other. Good relationships meant that pupils shared experiences and listened to others views. Both lessons were well planned and there was a good balance between teachers talking, pupils' participation and recording work. Pupils were very well behaved through the skilful management of the lessons. Work in books in all classes show religious education is consistently taught throughout the school.

114. The co-ordinator has a clear action plan for the subject and has worked well to develop schemes of work. She has monitored the curriculum and pupils books in each class and observed some teaching. The teaching of religious education is enriched by the vicar coming in regularly once a week to teach Year 6. Religious education provides a solid foundation for the good spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

