

INSPECTION REPORT

DELCE INFANTS SCHOOL

Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 11830

Headteacher: Ms Ann Morris

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. Vale
22476

DATES OF INSPECTION: 9TH – 11TH DECEMBER 2002

INSPECTION NUMBER: 247873

**FULL INSPECTION CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE SCHOOL
INSPECTIONS ACT 1996**

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 7 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fleet Road
Rochester
Kent

Postcode: ME1 2QA

Telephone number: 01634 844127

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Miss A. Watson

Date of previous inspection: 10th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22476	Mrs S. Vale	Registered inspector	Mathematics English as an additional language Music Art	How high are standards How well is the school led and managed
9614	Miss C. Webb	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents Educational Inclusion
12764	Ms W. Thomas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology History Religious Education	Curriculum
16492	Mr. R. Lever	Team inspector	English Geography Information and Communication technology Physical Education	How well are pupils' taught Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	PAGE
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Delce Infants School is situated in Rochester in the new unitary authority of Medway. It serves a mixed catchment area of both private and rented accommodation. It has approximately the same number of pupils on roll as an average sized primary school and serves pupils between the ages of 4 to 7. Since the last Ofsted inspection its numbers have increased and are now around 220 pupils. This allows the school to have 3 classes in each year group. Approximately 22 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is broadly in line with national averages. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is slightly higher than the national average, and has increased since the last inspection. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also above the national average, although the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is in line with the national average. Children enter the school with standards below those expected for their age; this has changed since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Delce Infant School continues to be a good school. Although standards achieved by pupils are low they make good progress in their learning supported by good teaching and very good leadership and management. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching across the school allows pupils including those with special educational needs to learn well.
- The leadership and management by the head teacher and deputy head teacher are very good
- Pupils' attitudes to the school and the way they relate to adults and each other are very good.
- The school provides a good start to children's learning in the reception classes.
- The school works well with parents who have a high regard for the school.
- The school provides well for pupils personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Opportunities to develop and use pupils' speaking skills more fully in all areas of the curriculum.
- Attainment in design and technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1997 good progress has been made. All the key issues for action resulting from the last inspection have been addressed well. The school has worked hard to provide further opportunities for pupils of high attainment to be more consistently challenged. The recent introduction of DICE (Delce Infants Curriculum Enrichment) where children work in literacy and numeracy in target groups is starting to have an effect, as more children achieve at the higher level in the national tests than previously. School portfolios of work have been developed. One of the major changes is the improvement to the accommodation, developing a new classroom, larger office space and an information and communication technology suite. The high noise level has been addressed through building walls and doors and this now allows pupils to be taught effectively without interference or interruption to their learning.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

The table above shows the results for 2002 where pupils age 7 achieve below the national average in reading and writing and well below in mathematics. However, when compared to similar schools they are in line with national averages in reading and writing and below in mathematics. These latest results show some improvement in reading and writing, reflecting the emphasis which the school has put on these areas of the curriculum. Other areas of the curriculum show that pupils are also achieving at national expectations except for music where they are achieving above national expectations. In design and technology pupils attain below what is expected for pupils of this age. The 2002 results and current inspection findings indicate that the action taken by the school in basic skills, by identifying targeted groups which are to receive extra support and the start of the DICE (Delce Infants curriculum enrichment) project, is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards achieved.

Inspection findings indicate that by the age of five pupils' achievements are similar to those expected nationally, except in speaking and some aspects of number work where they are below. Pupils quickly gain the skills to work independently, and with each other in groups. Whilst they listen carefully to adults, their speech is quite immature and many children have delayed language development. As they move through the school pupils' make good gains in their learning, building on their achievements.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen and want to come to school. The interest which they take in their work helps them to make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and have good manners.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work and play together very well. They show respect for their peers and adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

All of the above contribute to the warm welcoming atmosphere which there is at Delce Infants.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Fifty five per cent of the teaching seen was good or better, and of this 6 per cent was very good and 2 per cent excellent. Only 2 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The very good and excellent teaching was seen mainly in Year 2 but was not confined to a particular subject. Good quality teaching in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers have good knowledge of these subjects. They use good question and answer sessions to make the pupils think and to ensure their learning takes place. Overall teachers have good expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and how well they can achieve. Teachers' planning is very thorough and makes good use of the assessments which they do. This ensures that all pupils' needs are catered for fully and, with the good support of the learning support assistants, helps pupils to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of learning experiences for its pupils. Teachers often skilfully link different subjects through lesson topics
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The good provision supports pupils with special educational needs to make good progress
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Provision is effective and gives support to those pupils who need it
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The provision for moral and social development is good, as is the provision for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Assessment is thorough and is used well to plan work to support pupils' individual learning. All staff know their pupils well and this ensures a secure environment where children make good progress.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Parents feel that they are able to approach the school with any specific problems which they may encounter and that the school deals with them promptly and successfully. Parents are very supportive of all that the school does, and have a very positive view of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very Good. The head teacher gives the school very clear and purposeful leadership. This results in effective teamwork by the staff and a joint commitment to giving pupils a good education.
How well the governors fulfil	Good. The governing body meets its statutory requirements and fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors have a good knowledge of the school and

their responsibilities	are very supportive of all that it does.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the results of annual tests carefully in order to ensure that areas of weakness are addressed. There is good monitoring of teaching by the head teacher, senior management team, and subject coordinators. The school compares itself against others and knows exactly what to do to continue its good improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. Improvements to the premises, for example, the new classroom, library and information and communication technology suite, all support pupils' learning.

The accommodation and learning resources are good overall. Leadership and management are very strong. The school applies the principles of best value well, through analysing its 'value added' work and carefully reviewing its systems and procedures regularly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children make good progress • Behaviour is good • Children receive the right amount of work and teaching is good • They are well informed about how their children are getting on and the school is approachable • The school expects their children to work hard • The school works closely with parents and is well led and managed • The school helps their children to become mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside of school hours. • There were mixed views about the amount and consistency of homework children receive.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views about the school. There are limited opportunities for extra curricular activities as there is only one club on offer (gym club) to pupils during one lunch hour a week. There is sufficient and relevant homework set to support children's learning at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS

1. By the age of five pupils' achievements are similar to those expected nationally, except in communication and literacy and creative development where the majority of pupils are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals. The previous inspection found that pupils aged 7 achieved standards in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, starting from an average base line. Since then there has been a change in the make up of the population of the school. Many owner occupied families have moved out of the area and new families (including an increasing number of families where English is an additional language) have moved in, resulting in children starting at school with standards which are below the average base line. Many pupils enter school with impoverished language skills and this is resulting in a large number of pupils with standards which are below what is expected for pupils of this age. This has also affected test results and over the last few years results have remained well below national averages.
2. However the school has reacted well to the new situation and has started several new initiatives in order to support and increase pupils' attainment. They are working closely with other schools in the neighbourhood to see how they can improve and increase pupils' standards, in particular, in reading and writing. Delce itself has initiated targeting specific groups in order to increase their performance. For example, last year a group of boys were taught in a separate targeted group in order to increase their overall achievement in literacy and mathematics. This was very successful and the school has extended this further for the current year. Test results for pupils at the age of seven in 2002 show that whilst they are below in reading and writing and well below in mathematics when compared to similar schools results show that they are as expected for pupils of this age in reading and writing but below in mathematics. The school's 2002 national test results show that in reading, writing, and mathematics pupils' standards have improved on the previous year's results.
3. This year pupils in Year 2 have been split into 3 groups so that all pupils are given work specifically for their ability in order to support and challenge them to achieve. Even though this has only been in operation since the second half term of this term it is already starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment.
4. Overall, pupils make good progress during their time at Delce Infants, particularly, as they enter the school with below average attainment and leave with average attainment in reading and writing when compared to similar schools. The 2002 results and current inspection findings indicate that the action taken by the school to improve basic skills and in identifying the cohort which is to receive extra support is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards achieved.
5. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well against specific targets and goals and are making good progress overall, particularly when receiving extra support. Annual reviews for pupils with statements and others with individual education plans show pupils make good progress against their targets. Individual education plans are sufficiently specific to allow accurate assessments of pupils' progress to be made. Pupils form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other.

6. During the inspection standards in **English** throughout the school were below what is expected for pupils of this age, this is particularly noticeable in pupils' speaking skills. By the age of 7, whilst pupils listen attentively and answer when spoken to they do not speak confidently nor do they use correct grammatical spoken language. Whilst standards in reading are below average overall, there is a small but significant group of pupils achieving at higher than average standards. There are a large number of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 who need extra support in order to increase their reading abilities. The additional and early literacy strategies support pupils' improvement in standards of reading well. Standards in writing are below national averages, but as in reading, there is a small but significant group of pupils achieving at higher than average standards.
7. In **mathematics**, there is a small but significant number of pupils who are likely to exceed expected standards for their age. However, the majority of Year 2 pupils are unlikely to meet national average performance levels by the end of the year. Since the last inspection standards in mathematics have remained well below average but last year's test results showed some improvement when compared to similar schools. By the age of 7 pupils can do simple addition and subtraction and know about 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes, halves and quarters and can tell the time.
8. In **science**, pupils gather a wide range of scientific knowledge as they move through the school and by the age of 7 the majority of pupils will achieve at levels expected for their age. By Year 2 pupils know about the features of living things and a healthy lifestyle.
9. Pupils' standards in **information and communication technology (ICT)** are as expected for pupils of this age. The introduction of the new information and communication technology suite and the emphasis put on this area of the curriculum has ensured that pupils have kept up to date with latest developments.
10. Pupils by the age of seven achieve standards in **music** which are above national expectations. All pupils including those with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils sing well unaccompanied and compose music to a good standard for their age.
11. By the age of seven pupils' standards in **design and technology** are unsatisfactory. Whilst there are some elements of their achievement that meet national expectations the majority of pupils under achieve in this subject.
12. In **art** standards throughout the school are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils use a variety of media, including, charcoal, pastels, textiles, and paint. Pupils build up their skills systematically as they move through the school and as they mature they use their knowledge to design and refine their work. Standards in **geography** are in line with what is expected nationally. Pupils are competent in the use of map skills and are beginning to develop reasonable inquiry skills, although these are hampered on occasions by pupils' impoverished language skills. Pupils achieve at levels expected for their age in **history**. Their factual knowledge is satisfactory and they are able to make comparisons well between their lives now and the past. By the age of seven pupils' standards in those activities observed in **physical education** are in line with expectations for their age. They have the opportunity to develop their skills in dance, gymnastics and games. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in **religious education**. They have levels and

knowledge expected of their age, and understand the importance that people of different faiths place in their beliefs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

13. The school continues to instil the positive attitudes and values recorded in the last inspection report. Children and pupils like their school and the majority are waiting in the playground well before time in the mornings. Their attendance has been satisfactory this term at just over 94 per cent. However there are persistent latecomers, despite the school stressing to parents the importance of both regular attendance and punctuality for their child's education.
14. Registration provides a calm start to the day, with responses in different languages in some classes. From the time they arrive children are welcomed into the warm atmosphere of the reception classes; quickly learn right from wrong and what is expected of their behaviour. The majority play well together and enjoy choosing their activities and later reporting on these. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and eager to learn. For example, after remembering the story of the three little pigs in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils thought very hard as they examined straw, wood and bricks before deciding which would be the strongest material for house building and were keen to give their sensible answers.
15. An inclusive society, the school succeeds in integrating all pupils in lessons, with appropriate, well targeted support wherever possible. They are tolerant of those who have specific problems and recognise that their behaviour can be different from their own. For example, in one information and communication technology lesson pupils congratulated a boy who had printed his picture independently because they understood that he needed to see his task completed. Those few who speak English as an additional language are well supported by their peers. Lunchtime is a sociable occasion, with lively chatter at all tables and well earned pride when designated to sit at the 'celebration' table, laid with a special cloth. Good relationships with adults and amongst pupils are evidenced by the warm and lively atmosphere around the school. Pupils' social development is very good.
16. The majority of pupils behave well at all times although a minority suffer from short concentration or have been identified as having academic or other specific needs and sometimes indulge in silly, immature behaviour. This usually occurs when the lesson has not succeeded in capturing their attention. Pupils know the Golden Rules and understand why these are necessary. They develop very good moral values and a sense of natural justice as they go through the school. Pupils try hard to please their teacher and value their stickers. They like to write their names on the green leaves before fixing these to the 'tree' in their classrooms. When the head teacher reads names from the achievement book in the celebration assembly pupils are proud to share their successes with others and for their green leaf to be added to the assembly hall 'tree'. Sanctions are perceived as fair and none wish to lose any of their Golden Time or their personal star. No instances of bullying or other inappropriate behaviour were observed and there has only been one very short exclusion in the past year.
17. In the playground pupils enjoy their freedom. The inevitable mishap occurs but is quickly spotted and dealt with effectively by vigilant supervisors. Others are concerned if one of their friends is hurt.

18. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility and their personal development is good. When asked to carry registers, act as class helpers or operate the sound system for assemblies pupils do so happily and conscientiously. They are pleased when allowed to deliver letters for the secretary. One girl makes sure that all use the new litter bin in the playground, and others, identified by their yellow baseball caps, carry out their 'buddy' duties with great diligence, trying hard to find another in need of a friend. All are proud of their school community. "We like learning", "teachers teach us" and "this is a fair school" were just three of the positive comments made to inspectors.
19. Pupils are interested in learning about other countries, their religions, traditions, stories and music. Those in Year 2 made sensible comparisons between houses in this country and in rural Kenya, and were fascinated to note there were no taps in the round house and that it was made of mud. Pupils are aware of their own heritage and dance round the maypole in the spring: they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Overall teaching in the school is good, an improvement since the last inspection, and this allows pupils to learn and achieve well. In the lessons seen only one was judged to be less than satisfactory. Just over half were judged good or better.
21. In the Foundation Stage teaching is consistently good. It is well planned to the early learning goals and teachers have a good understanding of how younger children learn.
22. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good overall but is stronger in Year 2, where it is often very good and in one lesson was excellent. This leads to good learning in which pupils make good progress, working at a good pace and showing good levels of interest. Teachers plan well and the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is consistently good. Good methods capture pupils' interest and maintain a brisk pace to learning. However, when teaching lacks the same urgency, the pace is affected by pupils' restlessness, calling out and other low level disruption. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and music, and is sound in all other national curriculum subjects and religious education.
23. All pupils are planned for in teaching, including those with a special educational need. Teachers use appropriate methods, with clear learning intentions which enable all pupils to learn effectively. They take appropriate account of the targets set out in individual education plans. These are clear and sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. The teaching assistants offer good support and keep accurate records of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology to support the learning of basic skills. The learning support assistants offer good support and keep accurate records of the progress of pupils.
24. There are some good examples of learning at home making a good contribution to the pupils' achievement, particularly in pupils practising their reading skills at home and regularly learning spellings. This shows good parental links between home and school. Parents at the parents meeting were concerned that homework was not consistently set, during the inspection, appropriate homework was seen to be given to pupils and reading practice was consistently given. Pupils knowledge of their own

learning is also good and when questioned pupils, in particular in Year 2, clearly understand and can explain why they are doing what they are doing. This was seen in a very good music lesson in Year 2 where pupils were delighted to explain and play the music they were creating and to explain how they had achieved this.

25. In the best teaching, the teacher immediately grabs pupils' attention. This happened in an excellent religious education lesson in Year 2, where pupils learnt why the star was important in the Christmas story. Very good questioning encouraged reflection and pupils gave thoughtful and mature answers. They were entranced by the very sensitive illustrations and one pupil thought the artist "had a wonderful mind". As they made a star they made a Christmas wish - not for themselves, but for someone else. This shows a developing spiritual awareness. In a very good English lesson the teacher's very good subject knowledge led to high quality questioning to elicit answers. There was a very good pace to the lesson, which encouraged very good learning. In a high quality dance lesson in Year 2 the teacher provided a good musical stimulus for pupils to move in an imaginative way as robots, changing speed and levels and concentrating on their movements. She successfully encouraged pupils to sensitively evaluate the performance of others and think about how they could improve.
26. Where teaching was less effective, as in a Year 1 design and technology lesson, the teacher did not have good strategies for managing restless behaviour and pupils were not really given opportunities to develop their skills. Instead of using pupils' previous designs she gave them simple templates which did not challenge them, and boys particularly were inattentive and unenthusiastic. In a Year 1 physical education lesson there was an element of over control that spoilt the flow of the lesson and restricted activity. This affected not only the progress pupils made, but also their enjoyment.

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

27. In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum is broad and remains similar to the previous inspection. It includes all subjects of the national curriculum and religious education. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The governors have decided that there will not be a formal programme of sex education but that pupils' questions will be addressed sensitively as they arise. The school nurse visits to speak to children about healthy eating and developing a healthy lifestyle. A theatre group recently presented a workshop on drugs education, 'Alice's amazing adventures', appropriate to pupils' ages and levels of understanding. Classes have regular circle times during which pupils have opportunities to talk about issues that concern them. This helps them to listen to one another and develop their social skills. However, the time allocated to subjects is uneven and some subjects are not allocated enough time to allow pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. History and geography currently have a low profile in the school and very little evidence was available during the inspection.
28. Teachers plan their work together in year groups. Planning is monitored by subject leaders and the head teacher. This helps co-ordinators to give advice and support to colleagues and ensures that pupils in the same year group experience similar learning opportunities.

29. The school provides a limited range of extra curricular activities. These vary from term to term. At present there is a regular gymnastics club, but this is the only extra curricular activity on offer. The school also provides art, music and sports activities at different times of the year. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest such as, the Kent Museum of Rural Life, the local Guildhall Museum and an environmental centre. This involvement with the local community is good and enriches pupils' learning.
30. The school has very good links with the attached Junior School. The head teachers meet regularly. There are very good curriculum links and arrangements for pupils to transfer to the Junior School are very good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs from the Junior School attends reviews of pupils' progress for those pupils with special educational needs before they transfer to Year 3. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has good links with local pre - schools.
31. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is good for pupils requiring extra help with their learning and is proving effective for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Provision is good in English and mathematics, in terms of support and work; it is well matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum is appropriately organised for those identified with special educational needs and no pupils are presently disapplied. Arrangements for using individual education plans are effective in ensuring needs are met whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

32. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
33. Acts of collective worship provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and those of others. In an excellent religious education lesson, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the experiences the Wise Men might have felt about their journey to Bethlehem. Teachers question pupils well, encouraging them to explore ideas and express their thoughts.
34. The school promotes moral values well. Each class displays the school's 'Golden rules'. These are well understood by pupils. As a result they behave well. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They work well in partnership with the skilled learning support assistants and provide good role models for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. They take care of their own property and look after school resources.
35. In lessons, pupils work well together in pairs and in groups. They are co-operative and helpful. Delce Infants encourages pupils to work together for example in music when composing and in art lessons in Year 1 where pupils are encouraged to work together and to support each other.
36. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. Art and music provide pupils with satisfactory opportunities for learning. The school is keen to introduce pupils to a range of cultural experiences. Recent visitors to the school include an Indian dance workshop, a pottery workshop and a steel band from a local grammar school. Pupils greatly enjoy these events. Pupils also take part in local music festivals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school places a high priority on pupils' health, welfare and safety and good pastoral care is one of many strengths. Risk assessments take place regularly, security is reviewed and staff trained in first aid are on site at all times. Practice of first aid is good. The head, as the designated teacher for child protection, regularly updates her training and shares this in the staff room. Good guidelines are followed where there are concerns.
38. Effective procedures promote and monitor attendance. Parents know they should inform the school of reasons why their child is absent and the majority do so. The education welfare officer visits the school regularly and is appropriately involved if a child's absence or punctuality is causing concern. Holidays during term time are discouraged but still form a major part of the authorised absence percentage.
39. The positive behaviour management systems are effective in promoting good behaviour, and this is monitored very well. Golden Rules and reasons for them are known and understood. Popular rewards include stickers and the light and dark coloured green leaves. Group achievements are recorded on red apples adorning the 'tree' in the hall. Sanctions are graduated and include sitting by an adult and eventually going to see the head teacher. The withdrawal of their star is punishment enough for the majority, all of whom try very hard to regain this. Exclusion is very rarely necessary.
40. The school has very good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic attainment and progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The wealth of data, collated through detailed analyses of Pips (phonics in progress), NFER (national) testing and SATS (standards assessment tasks) results, is used well to plan for all to make appropriate progress and to identify those who will benefit from the Delce Infants curriculum enrichment programme. These calculations also enable the school to measure accurately how much value they have added during the short time pupils are there. With the demise of baseline assessment testing, Foundation Stage portfolios are being trialled, with the intention of extending these throughout the school. Learning support assistants record individual and group progress as well as achievements during most lessons. Targets for individuals, groups and classes are set and progress tracked. The grids used by teachers for parent consultations, detailing three strengths and areas where improvement is needed, provide a very good basis for communication and for the annual reports.
41. Pupils' personal development is encouraged successfully but only formally recorded in their annual reports. It would be useful to include this within the academic assessment procedures. Pupils are expected to help teachers and to care for others. Through assemblies and discussions in their circle time sessions pupils are made aware of social and moral issues and try to resolve any problems arising amongst their friends. Talks from the school nurse and representatives of the fire service and British Rail police as well as Alice's Curious Adventures, performed by the Channel Theatre, alert them to the dangers and difficulties they may face outside their school environment. Through good liaison and exchange visits with the junior school, where many attend gym club, pupils are well prepared for transfer when the time arrives.
42. Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school uses assessment data from teachers, from assessments when children

enter the school and standardised tests to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has established good links and relationships with parents who are very supportive of its aims and ambitions for their children. All sign the home school agreements but only half a dozen regularly assist teachers in classes, where their help is much appreciated. All are invited to the Tuesday assembly, when ten or so regularly attend, and to class assemblies. Parents and relatives crowd into school for the productions, eager to see what their child can do. The hall is filled to overflowing at both performances.
44. Parents now receive very good quality information from the school, an improvement since 1997 when this was deemed to be only satisfactory. The brochure, governors' annual report to parents, numbered news and other letters, sent home via 'pupil post', ensure that parents know well in advance the dates of events and about happenings at school. All are given curriculum information at the beginning of the year. Parents' attendance at consultation meetings is very good. Teachers are well prepared for these, asking parents to sign their record sheet which includes questions on how happy children are and what they enjoy most and least at school, as well as progress information and how children could improve in areas where they are weak. The head teacher is in the playground every morning to speak to parents and she and other staff are available if parents have concerns. They are formally consulted by the school through a focussed questionnaire once a year.
45. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs. They provide appropriate support and regularly review their child's progress. Parents are pleased with the support their children receive. The teaching assistant with specific responsibility for pupils with English as an additional language has held a coffee morning for these pupils' parents so that they could ask any questions that they might have and to further develop good links between home and school. This is good practice.
46. Parents of children who have special education or other needs share in their child's individual education plan and are invited to the reviews. Those who speak English as an additional language are well informed and the friendly secretary is always on hand to help with form-filling or to explain documentation to any parent who does not understand.
47. Most parents help their children at home. However the use of the home reading book as a means of communication between home and school is variable with the majority being completed by teacher and parent alike. Parents are pleased with the annual reports which detail what has been studied and their child's achievements, although some of the targets set are too general to be useful.
48. In the absence of a formal parent teacher association a dedicated group of fund-raisers run fun and enjoyable events. The recent autumn fair raised over £400 and a total of over £3000 is donated to school funds each year to be spent for the benefit of children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The head teacher's leadership and management of the school, including the delegation and contribution of staff with management responsibilities are very good, an improvement since the last inspection. The head teacher and governing body have a clear vision of what is needed for the school to develop and to continue to improve. The head teacher's very good management provides very clear educational direction for the school and has the total confidence of pupils, parents, staff, governors, external agencies and the community. Her leadership is very good, and she really wants her pupils to achieve well.
50. The head teacher is very well supported by the deputy head teacher, senior staff, school secretary and governors. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. Roles and responsibilities are effectively delegated. The role of the subject coordinators is well developed. There are improved arrangements for co-ordinators to establish standards in their subjects and to identify strengths and weaknesses in teachers' planning. Teaching and learning are monitored in English, mathematics and science by the subject coordinators. All subject co-ordinators have specific time timetabled to enable them to monitor and observe their colleagues teach in their subject area. As yet not all have had the opportunity to do this. This will be good practice as it allows subject coordinators first hand experiences of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The coordinators act on their findings ensuring the teaching that pupils receive is relevant and supportive to their learning. Coordinators regularly monitor planning and pupils' work to ensure that there is full coverage of the curriculum, and continuity between classes and year groups.
51. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and has attended a number of relevant courses. She keeps the required documentation in good order and regularly monitors progress. The provision of teaching assistants is good and they give good support.
52. There is a specific room where pupils can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in groups, but most support is within classrooms or in common areas around the school. The building does not easily enable disabled access and has no disabled toilet facilities.
53. Resources for special educational needs in terms of books and materials are good. Specific information and communication technology software for developing basic skills is being extended.
54. The school's aims and values are well defined in the school improvement plan and in various policy statements. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good. The school monitors its performance well. In addition to the co-ordinators, the head teacher monitors teaching and learning in each class each term. Governors are informed of the findings. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed, through NFER tests and national tests. Assessment in the core subjects of English and mathematics is good and used appropriately when setting the curriculum.
55. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The governors have good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the school and this enables them to play a full part in supporting its direction with the head teacher. An appropriate range of committees meet on a regular basis, and governors visit the school as regularly as they can. The chair of governors provides

effective leadership of the governing body and her supportive professional relationship with the head teacher has established a good link between the work of the school and the governing body.

56. The school has effective procedures for the induction of new staff. This enables all staff to settle into the positive ethos of the school as soon as possible. At the time of the inspection, there was one temporary position, but the school has appointed a new teacher for the new year.
57. There is a nominated governor for special educational needs. She works hard with the special educational needs coordinator to ensure the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is useful in that the special educational needs governor is also a learning support assistant working in the school so that she has direct inside knowledge of what is happening. The special educational needs co-ordinator is efficient and manages provision well, ensuring that targeted and consistent support is available throughout the school to support pupils with learning and medical needs. The special educational needs coordinator has time to fulfil her duties and regularly meets the governor responsible for special educational needs, providing regular reports and information.
58. Statutory requirements in relation to special educational needs are fully met. Individual education plans are in place and the requirements of statements are fulfilled well. Specialist support is made available and staff, including learning support assistants, undertake regular training and professional development. The provision made for special educational needs, including assessment and monitoring has a significant impact on the progress pupils make. Specific grants are used effectively to ensure that pupils are supported, trained staff available and on the whole there is satisfactory access to external specialists and resources. However, it is relevant to note that currently there is a distinct shortage of speech and language therapists in the Medway area, and several children at Delce Infants have been on the waiting list for support for a long time. This obviously has some impact upon standards in pupils' language acquisition and speaking development.
59. The school improvement plan is an effective working document. All members of staff and the governors are involved in identifying areas which need development and a three to six year overview is established. The school has focused its development on the raising of standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics and in their follow up work from the last inspection. The clear focus of the school improvement plan is starting to have a positive effect on raising standards. It is carefully and regularly reviewed.
60. Day to day administration in the office is very efficient. The secretary/finance officer is fully conversant with all financial transactions and makes a positive contribution to the school's good financial management and control of monies. She helps the head teacher to prepare the carefully set budget, produced after reference to priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Although the projected carry-forward figure represents over twelve per cent of the total budget this is reducing as it funds the extra learning support staff. Both the secretary/finance officer and head teacher monitor the monthly cost to budget projections and the former ensures that the Chair of the Finance committee receives the monthly printout from the local education authority, with appropriate explanations if necessary. Specific grants are appropriately allocated and well monitored.

61. Good procedures are in place to ensure that the principles of best value are applied. The head teacher and other staff have visited a local Beacon school to see how they can improve their own school. Delce Infants is involved in a local cohort of other schools, whose results have been disappointing, and they are working closely together to support each other in improving standards. This has resulted in the introduction of DICE (Delce Infants Curriculum Enrichment.) Results are carefully analysed and the school aims to increase pupils' performance as far as they are able. In the small number of pupils where progress is not as good, the school carefully ensures that appropriate provision is put in place to enhance the progress of these pupils. Governors receive regular reports. All specific grants are used for their designated purposes. Satisfactory use is made of new technology to support management. There is a particularly large amount of money which the school is carrying forward. Some of this has been put aside to use towards future building plans for the school, and towards the funding of the extra learning support assistants.
62. Accommodation is used well. The recent additions of a new classroom, increased office space, new library and new information and communication technology suite have allowed the school to accommodate the growing number of pupils. Since the autumn term 1999, there are three classes in each year group (the third intake for the reception classes start in January.) Both the internal and external grounds are very well maintained, and kept in good condition. Pupils are fortunate to have access to a large playing field behind the school, which is used to support pupils' physical development. Learning resources are satisfactory in most subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve standards in English by;

- building on the enhancement programme that has increased the number of pupils exceeding national expectations and more closely targeting those in the middle set.
- extending the opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop their speaking skills by

*looking at teaching styles and increasing occasions when pupils can work in pairs and groups

*ensuring questioning is more open so as to elicit more than simple responses

*providing more imaginative situations for speaking in a wider range of settings

*ensuring pupils extend subject specific language

(paragraphs; 73 – 79, 95, 128)

Improve standards in mathematics by;

- Building on the enhancement programme that has increased the number of pupils exceeding national expectations and more closely targeting those in the middle set.
- Raising standards through teachers' higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.

(paragraphs; 80 – 91)

Raise standards of attainment in design and technology

- Strengthening teachers' knowledge and skills in the subject.
- By allowing pupils to investigate and develop their own ideas and to make their own choices.

(paragraphs; 103 – 106)

Minor Issues

- Increase the number of opportunities for pupils to experience extra – curricular activities outside the daily curriculum.
- Give more emphasis to the timing given to geography and history, to give these subjects a higher profile.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	24	22	1	0	0
Percentage	2	6	47	43	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y R – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y R – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs, including school action plus		16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.1
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	38	44	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	32
	Girls	35	36	35
	Total	64	66	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (74)	80 (78)	82 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	32
	Girls	34	32	34
	Total	63	62	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (77)	76 (77)	80 (74)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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: Y R – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	22

Education support staff: Y R – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	233

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	532317
Total expenditure	513410
Expenditure per pupil	2282
Balance brought forward from previous year	85553
Balance carried forward to next year	104460

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	177
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	23	1	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	51	4	1	3
The teaching is good.	54	41	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	54	9	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	32	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	41	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	59	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	41	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	51	0	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	33	28	4	16

Parents at the parents meeting were unanimous that the school is very approachable and that it is very well led. Parents feel that the school is very supportive with any problem or concern that they may have. There were mixed views about the amount of homework their children receive with many parents wanting a more systematic approach.

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

63. At the time of the inspection there were two Reception classes. A third Reception class is to be opened in the new year for children whose 5th birthday falls between February and August 2003. Since the time of the last inspection the Foundation Stage of children's learning has been introduced and the school's current provision for the youngest children was inspected according to this.
64. Most of the children have attended play-groups before starting school, usually on a part time basis. When children start school a large number have below average speaking skills. The personal and social development of many children is also below average. Children's early mathematical skills are average. A small proportion of children have good skills in these areas of learning but most do not. Children receive a good start to their education in the Reception classes and make good progress in most areas of learning. Most children have settled well into school and are becoming happy, confident learners.
65. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The school has been successful in introducing the Foundation Stage curriculum. A separate outdoor area has recently been established. This is used for a range of activities to complement work in the classroom. Teachers plan well for the six areas of learning, providing children with a varied range of stimulating learning experiences. They are well supported by skilled learning support assistants who are fully involved in all activities and support children well. Adults make regular assessments of children's progress in all the activities. These observations are used well to plan further work. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. When children start school many of them do not have well developed skills in this area of learning. The school reports that in recent years there has been an increase in the number of children having social and emotional difficulties when they start school. This is confirmed by the school's assessment information. Most children are happy and settled in school and are used to class routines. However, a small number find it difficult to concentrate and need a lot of support from adults to stay on task. At snack times children need encouragement to talk quietly to each other. Adults model this well for them, sitting with different groups and encouraging good relationships. A group of able children played very well together in the role play area, buying and selling things in the class shop. However, when choosing their own activities, a number of children find it difficult to take turns and share toys. Several tend to play alone rather than with other children. A good number of children are developing positive attitudes to their work. They try hard and concentrate well at their chosen activities. These children are likely to meet the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year, though a significant proportion will not.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Many children start school with immature speech and language. A small group of children have above average skills in this area of learning but for most children language development is below expected levels. Many children are not confident in speaking. They use single words when answering questions and nod or point to make their needs known. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. In a shared reading session children enjoyed joining in with repeated phrases in the text. A small number of children are beginning to recognise common words and read independently. In their writing, most children know that English is written from left to right. They know that they should leave spaces between words and the more able children are beginning to write simple sentences using capital letters and full stops. They are linking sounds to letters and use their knowledge to write simple words. The work of lower attaining children shows that they recognise few letter sounds or words and are not yet writing independently. The staff guide children well in talking about their activities. They provide plenty of opportunities for children to read and write. Pencils, crayons and different kinds of paper are readily available and children enjoy using them. For example, in the shop, children wrote shopping lists and bills for each other. By the time they start in Year 1 a small proportion of children are likely to meet or exceed the early learning goals for this aspect of learning but a significant proportion are likely to reach below average levels.

Mathematical development

68. Children make good progress in this aspect of learning because the teaching is good. When children start school they show an interest in numbers and counting. They quickly learn a range of counting songs and rhymes and recognise written numbers. They count the numbers of children present each day and then count the numbers having school or packed lunches. They are able to match numbers to the correct number of objects, for example, putting different numbers of candles on a birthday cake. When one child counted six candles instead of eight, another child was able to say that two more were needed. A small group of able children are able to count reliably well beyond ten and confidently identify 19 as one less than 20. Children enjoy counting games and rhymes. They enjoy physical counting activities, such as clapping ten times, jumping eight times or clicking their fingers 12 times. Children are less secure in their use of mathematical language, apart from the small group of more able children. In looking at the book "Rosie's Walk" some children were able to use words like 'over', 'behind', 'around' and 'through' to describe Rosie the hen's walk round the farm. Several children can write numbers to nine correctly in sequence and match the correct number of objects to the numeral. A small number of children are already meeting aspects of the early learning goals for mathematics and are likely to meet them by the end of the Reception year. Most children are likely to meet the numerical aspects of the early learning goals but may have difficulty in meeting the aspects concerned with mathematical language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. When they start school a small number of children have a good general knowledge for their age, but the majority have limited knowledge and understanding. Children make good progress in the Reception classes because of the stimulating range of activities provided but, as many of them start from a low base, they are unlikely to attain the early learning goals for this area by the time they start in Year 1. Children

greatly enjoy using computers in the new suite. Because of the low numbers in the reception classes this term, children do not have to share computers and are able to practise their skills. Whilst one group worked on a painting programme, the other children worked with a programmable toy. Each group experienced both activities. Children are able to switch on the computers and load the program without help. They use the paint program competently, choosing different tools and colours. They choose different stamps from the program to make patterns. One child was fascinated by symmetry and used the program to create attractive symmetrical patterns. Children are able to print their work.

70. When using the 'roamer' (a programmable toy) children were able to follow a series of instructions to make the toy travel forwards, backwards and turn. Some do this competently whilst others follow the picture cue cards of instructions. They understand that they need to clear the toy's memory before putting in a new set of instructions. Children are very well supported by the skilled learning support assistant. Children have brought in photographs of themselves at different ages and can talk about how they have changed since they were babies. Children are curious and enjoy investigating how things work and why. A small number of children are able to choose the tools they need for different tasks and are becoming skilled at assembling and joining different materials. However, the development of a significant number of children is held back by their weak language skills.

Physical development

71. Good attention is given to children's physical development. Children in the reception classes have their own secure outdoor area, which is being developed. They also use the school hall for dance and gymnastics. Children are able to manage their clothes independently when changing for physical education, apart from collar, cuff buttons and ties. This is expected in children of this age. In their physical education lessons, children use the apparatus with increasing care and control. Most are able to climb and balance with good co-ordination. They show developing awareness of other children in using the hall space. They wait for other children to finish their sequence of movements on the apparatus before beginning their own. In the outdoor area children have opportunities to develop their throwing skills by throwing bean bags into a hoop. In class, children have average control of pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. They use construction toys such as 'Lego' to build models. Most children are developing their physical skills well and are likely to meet the early learning goals for physical development by the time they begin Year 1.

Creative development

72. Children make satisfactory progress in this aspect of learning. They enjoy singing and playing percussion instruments, though their attainment in music is below expected levels. Children enjoy painting and using the paint program on the computer. They have opportunities to draw and to explore a range of materials. Each classroom has an imaginative play area, though these were not widely used during the inspection. Children recognise colours and enjoy mixing colours to provide a wider range for their paintings. In play children are able to use a wide range of materials. They enjoy jigsaws and inset puzzles. Whilst a small proportion of children will meet the early learning goals for creative development, the majority are unlikely to do so.

ENGLISH

73. Although pupils attain below average standards in English when compared with schools nationally, they are in line with those of similar schools. Many children enter the school with impoverished language skills but because of consistently good teaching and very clear direction from the co-ordinator all make good progress. All pupils are achieving well and building successfully on previous learning.
74. By Year 2 standards in speaking are still low and this is evident in other subjects. In all classes pupils listen attentively to their teachers but their responses show limited vocabulary and a general lack of confidence in speaking. An example of this in a middle targeted group in Year 2 is an inability to describe in sentences, when a girl explained a head injury "I *dun hurt it on door*". Opportunities to develop speaking skills are limited, although in this particular instance the teacher did repeat the sentence to the pupil grammatically correctly. There is little in the way of imaginative play, group discussion or speaking with partners. Teachers' questions are often quite directed and require only simple replies. In physical education pupils listen to instructions and carry them out safely and sensibly, but there are few opportunities to discuss and evaluate performance. In subjects such as science, design technology and geography the use of technical vocabulary is limited. However, all of this is only one aspect of teaching English and all other aspects are taught well.
75. By Year 2 overall standards in reading are below average. The number attaining Level 2 is below that found nationally but there is an above average number of good readers. These pupils quickly gain a good understanding of the use of letter sounds, which enables them to decipher new words. They read confidently, and show good skills of understanding what they are reading. The good support provided for pupils with special educational needs enables them to develop their basic reading skills. Most pupils enjoy reading and all look forward to sharing books and reading to others. They read regularly at home and the home/school reading record shows how they are progressing. More able readers are able to choose their own reading material from a good selection of available books. They talk about their favourite books with reasonable awareness, and about their favourite authors. They show good research skills from books and know that you can find information using computers, television and videos.
76. The percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation in writing in Year 2 is below the national average but as in reading, a higher number exceed the national expectation. Overall this means that, when compared with schools of a similar background, standards are in line. Work shows that higher attaining pupils' writing is clear and well-formed, and some move on to joined writing. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops and other punctuation is developing well as pupils write in more complex sentences. They are beginning to use more imaginative language to make their work more interesting: "*...there was a hedgehog called Max and he wanted to go to football training. Then something scared him because he thought they would use him as a football...*"
77. For those experiencing difficulties there is good support by teaching assistants. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are well focussed on what pupils need to learn next. For many pupils, handwriting is not well developed and few join their writing.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. Their lessons are suitably structured to teach pupils skills, give them opportunities to develop them

further in group work and assess their progress at the end. In all classes pupils develop reading and writing skills at an appropriate level and work is matched well to their different abilities. This ensures that pupils learn important basic skills, and higher attaining pupils are starting to press ahead. However, more emphasis needs to be given to teaching styles that encourage pupils to develop their speaking in a range of situations.

79. Management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator looks at planning, monitors teaching and reviews pupils' work. The school has developed good assessment procedures that show pupils' progress, and uses this data well to show the next steps that will move pupils on to the next levels. The setting arrangements in Year 2 have been successful in ensuring all pupils are challenged and have supported particularly well the higher attaining pupils. Book resources are good, and the library is appropriately used to find fiction books and research for topics. Information and communication technology is being developed to support written work across the school.

MATHEMATICS

80. Pupils attain well below average standards in mathematics when compared with schools nationally; standards are just below when compared with those of similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. However, pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well.
81. The majority of pupils enter the school in reception with mathematical skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the reception year the majority achieve the early learning goals and are ready to tackle the National Curriculum in Year 1.
82. By the time pupils reach the age of 7, ready to leave the school at the end of Year 2, they have continued to make good progress. Their attainment, overall, remains below what is expected for pupils of this age. However, an increased number of pupils are achieving above this standard in the 2002 end of key stage tests. This is an improvement on the 2001 results, where fewer pupils achieved at the higher levels.
83. Since the last inspection in 1997 standards in mathematics have seen an upward trend over time, but have improved over the last year. There is no significant difference between the attainment for boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and are ably supported by the learning support assistants who make sure that they have full access to the mathematical curriculum and support their learning thoroughly. Pupils achieve well considering that they start from standards which are below average.
84. By the age of 7 pupils can recall their addition and subtraction facts to ten, can double single digit numbers and name 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes. This is satisfactory attainment for pupils of this age. Most children are developing an understanding of place value and learning about time. Many children in Year 2, when learning the order of the months, found this particularly difficult and have yet to master this. More able pupils can measure in centimetres, using rulers and tape measures and can divide shapes such as rectangles and triangles into quarters and

halves. While this is satisfactory attainment for pupils of this age, it only accounts for approximately a third of the pupils in the year.

85. In order to try and raise attainment pupils in Year 2 are divided into 3 targeted ability groups in order to help them achieve to their maximum potential. This is a new initiative, which is still in the very early stages. However, early analysis indicates that it is already having a positive effect on raising pupils' standards of attainment.
86. The teaching of mathematics ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is very good, teachers have very good subject knowledge and the lessons are very well planned with all resources readily available and accessible. Pupils learn well in lessons where the teacher begins with a recap of the previous lesson and sets the context for learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher goes over previous work about telling the time. This reinforces pupils' learning and helps them to make good progress.
87. Good teaching is also seen in lessons where teachers use clear instructions, which are easily understood by the pupils and where there are high expectations for the pace of pupils' individual work. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were learning how to measure different objects in the classroom. The instructions were clearly understood at the beginning of the lesson, pupils were able to work quickly with their partners and not need too much teacher intervention. Well planned lessons ensure that there is a clear learning objective and that these are shared with pupils and referred to at the end of lessons. Effective learning methods using mental warm up activities develops a speedier recall of number, for all abilities of pupils. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were learning how to double numbers using cubes. This allowed them to visualise numbers doubled and was a good way of increasing their mental arithmetic.
88. Teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics overall is good, and lessons are well planned to the National Numeracy Strategy. Good assessment ensures that teachers are well aware of what areas in mathematics pupils need to develop. For example, an assessment task showed that several pupils in Year 2 were unable to put the days of the week and months of the year into the correct order. As soon as this was identified as an area to develop, it was included in teachers' planning.
89. Learning is good overall. This is more apparent in the older year groups, both in the standards of work in lessons and in pupils' work over time. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. However, there are lessons where teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough; this is particularly noticeable in some lessons in Year 1. For example, in a lesson on time, the more able pupils easily tackled o'clock and half past, and were ready for their learning to be extended. In one lesson the teacher was well aware of this and introduced quarter to and quarter past but in the other 2 lessons in Year 1 the teachers just gave the pupils more work of the same. This was a missed opportunity to extend pupils learning. There are occasions when appropriate homework is given to support pupils' learning, but this is not always on a regular basis.
90. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in mathematics lessons are generally good and are at their best when the work closely matches their ability, as seen in Year 2. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons, are positive about what they can do and enjoy the challenges that are part of learning. The use of information and communication technology where appropriate to support pupils' learning also enhances pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

91. The mathematics coordinator leads the subject well. The quality of the curriculum has improved and the monitoring of teaching is now fully in place. A detailed assessment procedure has been produced which allows teachers to track pupils' progress from the end of reception through to the end of Year 2. Targets are set and an analysis of whether these are achieved or not (and reasons why), is undertaken each year. This information is used in teachers' planning to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate and well matched curriculum. All of this is starting to have a positive impact upon pupils learning and the standards which they achieve. The coordinator monitors lessons and a range of pupils' work. She identifies staff training needs and provides opportunities for these to be met. There is an appropriate range of mathematical resources which are well maintained.

SCIENCE

92. The teacher assessments of attainment in science in Year 2 in 2002 showed that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was above that found in schools nationally. However, this represents a small group of higher attaining pupils. The attainment in science overall was well below the national average.
93. During the inspection timetable arrangements meant that it was possible to observe only a small number of science lessons. Evidence has also been gained from pupils' work in books and from teachers' planning.
94. In lessons, pupils attained satisfactory standards in science. Year 1 pupils investigate materials. They had been reading the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' and were thinking about which materials would be most suitable for the pigs' houses. They know that a straw house would be easy to blow down because straw is very light, and also that the straw and stick houses would not be held together by cement. Pupils in Year 2 investigate forces. They had previously carried out experiments to see whether toy cars moved better on smooth or rough surfaces. In the lesson observed they investigated how far toy cars would travel down ramps of different gradients. The teacher encouraged the pupils to estimate how far the cars would travel. Most thought that the cars would travel further down the steeper slopes. A group of higher attaining pupils were able to record their results in table form. They thought that if they used twice as many bricks to raise the slope, the car would travel twice as far. They were able to measure the distance travelled with reasonable accuracy. They could say that the force used was gravity. When they discussed their results, different groups had found different results. This was because some groups had found it difficult to measure and record their work accurately.
95. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work well together in their groups. In both the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons effectively. This enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Teachers explain tasks clearly. In setting up the tasks they question pupils well about what they think will happen, and encourage them to estimate the results. However, in discussing what has happened in the experiments, teachers tend to explain the conclusions and miss opportunities to ask pupils why they think the results of different groups varied. This would support the development of pupils' spoken language.
96. Management of science is satisfactory. The subject leader has worked with colleagues to develop the science curriculum, taking into account the introduction of

the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy since the last inspection. The topics for science are now linked with work in design and technology. Cross curricular links are being developed well. Teachers now assess pupils' progress in science. The science curriculum is supported by a range of visits, for example, to study riverside habitats. The school has made satisfactory progress in science since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

97. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is broadly average with some examples of work that exceed this where teaching is clearly effective. This is similar to the standard achieved at the last inspection. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well.
98. During Years 1 and 2, pupils experience a range of activities and media enabling them to explore pattern, colour and shape. They use paint, brush, crayon and charcoal and learn to control these effectively, becoming skilful in a range of techniques. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 2 pupils of all abilities use charcoal to sketch detailed drawings of African artefacts from close observation. Their work on Africa relates to their study of Kenya in geography lessons. Also in Year 1 pupils make imaginative collages out of a variety of materials and then are inspired to write about what they have made in their literacy lessons.
99. In Year 1 pupils experiment with colour mixing, producing paintings of different houses, such as flats, bungalows and other types of homes. They produce a good and skilful standard of paintings, and show a mature attention to detail in their paintings. They also experiment with developing sequencing of patterns in mathematics and paint their findings. In Year 2 they develop the use of individual patterns in the style of Paul Klee. They show a developing appreciation of the work of Klee. The collages and pictures they produce are of a good standard, and show a lovely and lively use of colour and design. They are a delight to look at. Also in Year 2 pupils design faces in clay. They use appropriate tools and learn how to manipulate the malleable material. They also really enjoy this activity.
100. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection as art was timetabled for later on in the week. Teaching seen was satisfactory and pupils made reasonable progress in learning how to manipulate clay. However, the samples of work seen around the school in displays indicate that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes better.
101. Assessment procedures have been developed since the last inspection and these are satisfactory. These are linked to lesson plans and provide teachers with information about those pupils who have exceeded or not met the lesson objectives.
102. The subject is well lead, but the coordinator has only had responsibility for the subject since September. Whilst there is a scheme of work the coordinator has plans to improve this during the year. Resources are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. In the previous inspection standards in design and technology were judged to be satisfactory, although only one lesson was observed. In the present inspection only a small number of lessons were observed. Further evidence was obtained from work on display and teachers' planning; these show that standards in design and technology overall are found to be unsatisfactory.

104. Pupils in Year 1 design Christmas cards. In a previous lesson they had drawn their designs. However, the teacher did not use these designs to make cards but provided templates that she had made. This meant that pupils did not relate the design to the making element of their project. The lesson was structured so that pupils were not given opportunities to make choices about their designs. This resulted in their being unenthusiastic and inattentive. In Year 2, pupils worked with clay to make faces. They were able to roll, cut and manipulate the clay successfully. Other groups were cutting out shapes to make Christmas decorations. Pupils do not have well developed physical skills. They are not able to thread their needles and are not developing their ability to plan and communicate their ideas.
105. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall though in one lesson teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, in some lessons the planned activities do not allow pupils to investigate and develop their own ideas. Pupils are expected to follow the teacher's instructions rather than making their own choices about their designs.
106. Management of the subject is just satisfactory. The co-ordinator has revised plans and linked lesson planning closely to the science curriculum. Design and technology has not been a recent priority in the school improvement plan and teachers have not been well supported in developing their knowledge and skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

107. During the inspection it was only possible to observe lessons in Year 2. Judgements are based on evidence of these lessons, discussions with teachers and pupils and on the school's planning and records. Planning shows that appropriate areas of study from national guidelines are in place and standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and have been maintained from the previous inspection.
108. The quality of teaching and learning is sound and pupils make steady progress as they go through the school. In Year 1 pupils have looked at where they live. They have located their house on a street map and shown how they get to school. In Year 2 pupils have learnt about similarities and differences between England and Kenya. They achieve this work well. In one lesson they were able to respond to the teacher's questions and showed appropriate knowledge. However, as questions were somewhat closed and required only simple answers, opportunities were lost to extend the opportunities to investigate the information sources and describe their findings. As other adults were present the opportunity was missed for group work and discussion. Across the school pupils develop their map skills as the range is extended. In Year 1 pupils can name the countries in the United Kingdom and identify the part of the country they live in. In Year 2 know that Africa is a continent and identify it on a globe.
109. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by visits into the local environment and by visits to Rochester. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they become aware of environmental issues and look at other countries and cultures. There is an interesting display of Kenyan artefacts, which lead to some interesting pattern work and observational

drawing in art. This shows that teachers plan well for good cross curricular links. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory and there are appropriate resources for the teaching of the subject. However, the time allocated to geography is slightly less than that found in schools nationally.

HISTORY

110. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one history lesson. Pupils enjoyed looking at artefacts and thinking about how life in the 1940s differs from their lives today. They understand that houses in earlier times did not have indoor sanitation. They also understand that most houses had no electricity and were lit by oil or gas lamps.
111. In the lesson observed teaching was satisfactory. The teacher has secure subject knowledge and made very good use of a range of artefacts to engage pupils' interest. Whilst there were relevant opportunities for pupils to talk about the artefacts, their spoken language still needs a lot more practice in order to support their work in history more fully.
112. Teachers' planning shows that topics are covered appropriately. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory and there are appropriate resources for the teaching of the subject. Pupils are developing their understanding of changes over time. However, the time allocated to history is slightly less than that found in schools nationally.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils' attainment remains in line with national expectations at Year 2. The school has kept abreast of developments since the previous inspection both in terms of increasing teacher expertise and developing resources.
114. The quality of teaching and learning in all aspects is sound. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners and all are making steady progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. In Year 1 lessons teaching supported English well as pupils used a program to type and print a Christmas message using a word bank. They were able to change fonts and size. They have used a data package to show results of investigations in mathematics and science in graphical form and have used various features of an art package to produce work at an appropriate level. In Year 2 pupils have extended their text handling skills and use bullet points and numbered steps in their writing. They access CD-ROM information and the Internet for research in other subjects and do this confidently. During the inspection learning support assistants gave valuable support in teaching Year 2 pupils to program a robotic toy. Pupils were excited and learnt how to plan and input a sequence of instructions to control its movements.
115. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and shows a clear understanding of future development needs. The ratio of computers to pupils is in line with the national average and the computer suite is well used and is having an impact on raising standards. The school has a digital camera, which is well used to support work across the curriculum. The newly arrived *smart* board is viewed as an exciting addition to resources and teachers are eagerly awaiting training. The subject enhances pupils' personal and social development as they work well together and

support each others' learning. There is a clear policy in place for safe use of the Internet and the use of computers in other subjects is developing appropriately.

MUSIC

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain good standards in music. This judgement shows that standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well, particularly in singing. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive good individual support and also achieve well.
117. The school's good provision includes a part time skilled piano player, who supports each class teacher in their teaching. This specialist also accompanies children when singing during concerts and other performances. Pupils achieve well in singing because they are given many opportunities to sing, particularly in their singing assemblies. They also sing throughout the school day, for examples at the end of a maths session in Year 1 pupils were given the opportunity to practise their songs for the Christmas concert. The teacher used this short session well not only to rehearse their songs but also to introduce them to beating a rhythm to the song as they sing.
118. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils sing clearly and in tune both with and without accompaniment. Their singing is tuneful, rhythmic and enthusiastic. They show a genuine enjoyment for all aspects of music. For example, in their singing practice they demonstrated good listening skills, sang a range of songs, all from memory, generally keeping good time and showing real enjoyment.
119. Music is given a high priority in the school, not only do pupils have the opportunity to sing with accompaniment but they also learn about other aspects of music such as composition and appreciation. Some good examples were seen in Year 2 where pupils created their own compositions in small groups, using tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The majority of pupils can remember and repeat a simple pattern by clapping correctly and keeping to the beat.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Strengths include the teachers' good knowledge of the subject, focused questioning and the teachers awareness of the need to develop the pupils' musical skills and to reinforce and consolidate their skills in other subjects, through for example developing listening skills. Other strengths, including the very good management of the pupils' behaviour, warm relationships and the careful drawing out of the pupils' responses, significantly aid their awareness and appreciation of music. There is a good pace to lessons and practical opportunities for pupils' involvement.
121. The subject is currently well led by the head teacher. Assessment provision and the use of information and communication technology in music are developing areas. Learning resources are satisfactory. Professional musicians visit the school throughout the year, making a positive contribution by playing for the pupils, and allowing them to try out instruments for themselves. This area of the curriculum has a very positive effect upon pupils' social, cultural and spiritual development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards by the age of seven are in line with expectations as they were at the previous inspection.

123. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory overall with some lessons showing clearly good teaching. It was sound in Year 2 games lessons, where teachers gave clear instruction for pupils to develop their control and accuracy when sending and receiving a ball by hand, foot or hockey stick. However, sometimes the over concern with noise disrupted the flow of lessons. In a Year 1 lesson and two Year 2 dance lessons teaching and learning were good. Teachers managed the lessons well and pupils showed imaginative response to both stories and music. In a very good Year 2 dance lesson, skilled teaching led to above average attainment. Pupils responded very well to the excellent management of their sequences, showing good awareness of space, direction and levels. The teacher gave good opportunities for pupils to evaluate the performance of others. They were sensitive in their comments and were able to offer suggestions for improvement. At the end of this final module they were able to explain what they had learned. In a good gymnastics lesson in Year 1 pupils learnt well. They made good progress in developing their skills and linking them in short movement phases, concentrating on rocking and rolling movements on the floor and on apparatus.
124. The good management of the subject is currently held by the head teacher. The school has adapted national guidelines, which ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered systematically. There is an adequate hard surfaced area, a large hall, and a big field, which support learning appropriately. There is a successful gymnastics club led by a trained coach which is well attended and uses the facilities of the Junior School.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 revise their knowledge of the Christmas story and consider how this is celebrated by Christians. Pupils know that not everyone celebrates Christmas. They understand that the festival is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and that Jesus is very important to Christians. Pupils are familiar with Advent calendars and know that these help them count the days to Christmas.
126. In Year 2 the teacher relates the Christian festival to pupils' previous work on the festival of Hanukah. They know that this is a Jewish festival. Pupils listened very attentively to the story about the wise men being led to Bethlehem by a star. Pupils are encouraged to use the pictures to reflect on the story and to think about the sights and smells that the wise men might have experienced on their journey. This thoughtful presentation of the story engages pupils' interest. The story is linked well to the assembly theme for the week and pupils show good knowledge and understanding.
127. Pupils are interested in religious education and behave well. This helps them to make satisfactory progress in the subject. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment was judged to meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is still the case and progress in religious education is satisfactory.
128. Teaching in religious education is good overall though it was excellent in one observed lesson. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge as regards content, but are less secure in teaching pupils how a religious faith affects the lives of believing communities. They are confident in telling the stories from faith traditions but do not provide sufficient activities to develop pupils' skills and knowledge of the

subject. They are inclined merely to ask pupils to draw pictures and retell the story. As pupils do not have well developed language skills, they find this difficult. Opportunities are lost to develop pupils' speaking skills through discussion. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, the teacher presented the story very well. Opportunities to promote spiritual development were planned and helped pupils to be very thoughtful and sensitive as they reflected on the meaning of the story. The teacher made imaginative use of resources, showing pupils some pottery crib figures from Nicaragua. Pupils were fascinated by these and it helped them to realise that Christmas is celebrated by people all over the world. Pupils were entranced by the sensitive illustrations in the book and one said that "the artist has a wonderful mind". The teacher drew pupils' attention to the significance of the star as a Christian symbol and relates this to the importance of light in the Christian faith. Pupils went on to make a star for their classroom display. As they did this they were asked to think of a Christmas wish, not for themselves but for someone else.

129. Management of religious education is satisfactory. A new locally agreed syllabus has recently been introduced. The co-ordinator has worked with colleagues to update the school's scheme of work to ensure that it meets the requirements of the new syllabus. New resources have been purchased to ensure that teachers are able to use the scheme effectively. There has been no recent professional development in religious education. The co-ordinator recognises that there is a need to review this as new teachers have joined the school and not all are confident in the subject. The school has good links with local church groups who support work in religious education. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.