

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BROOKFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Aylesford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118869

Headteacher: Mr Anthony Thomas

Lead inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 255632

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	344
School address:	Swallow Road Larkfield Aylesford Kent
Postcode:	ME20 6PY
Telephone number:	01732 843667
Fax number:	01732 871422
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Sexton
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This junior school serves an area of private and local authority housing in Larkfield, near Aylesford. It is larger than most primary schools. The pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, which are average overall. Almost all the pupils transfer from the infant school on the same site. The overall attainment of pupils in Year 6 was average on entry, but now the pattern is of below-average attainment at the start of Year 3. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs has been increasing in recent years, and is currently above average. The needs relate to learning and/or behaviour difficulties. Almost all the pupils are of white British origin, with a few from mixed ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English and needing support. The school gained Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People status in 2002, and won a school achievement award in 2001.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8402	Vivien Johnston	Lead inspector	English, Information and Communication Technology
9569	Jan Leaning	Lay inspector	
16492	Robert Lever	Team inspector	Art, geography, history, special educational needs
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, physical education
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, religious education

The inspection contractor was:

**e-Qualitas Limited**

Langshaw  
Pastens Road  
Limpsfield Chart  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0RE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>24</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory**, as is the value for money it provides. Its pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school, and the standards attained by the end of Year 6 are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership, and the school is managed satisfactorily.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils are very well behaved, and enjoy school and their learning
- The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils
- The pupils' personal development is good as the school provides very well for their moral and social development and has a positive ethos
- Lesson time is shorter than in most junior schools, which affects pupils' progress in the subjects that have too little time; these include art, design and technology, and religious education

The school declined after the last inspection in 1998 but it has improved considerably during the last two and a half years, under the present headteacher's leadership. **Overall, its improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.** The key issue from the last inspection, to improve assessment, has been tackled purposefully. A good system has been set up, and the school is well on the way to using its assessment information to improve teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	B	C	C	C
science	B	C	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The drop in the National Curriculum test results since 2001 is because of a falling trend in the overall ability of the year groups. **Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall**, and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils' attainment is broadly average, including in science. Here, standards are higher than in the test results because the teaching has been improved, as a result of which pupils are now making satisfactory progress. In physical education, pupils' achievement is good.

**The development of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** The development of their moral and social awareness is very good, and that of their spiritual awareness is satisfactory. Insufficient attention is paid to pupils' cultural development, which is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning are good, and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.**

**Teaching is satisfactory**, as is pupils' learning. The most effective teaching tends to be in Year 6, with challenging activities and a good pace to lessons. The pace of other lessons, though, is sometimes rather slow. Pupils with special educational needs learn well when given individual support, but their needs are not taken sufficiently into account in whole-class work. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, and the accommodation and resources for learning are good. The school provides very well for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety, and very successfully promotes a positive ethos in which relationships are very good and pupils are happy to learn. Good partnerships with other schools contribute to pupils' wellbeing. Links with parents are satisfactory overall, although the lack of reading homework holds back pupils' development as independent readers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher leads the school well, and has a clear vision for its future. Staff carry out their management responsibilities satisfactorily. The work of the governing body is satisfactory, and it has ensured that statutory requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally happy with the school. They feel that their children like school, are treated fairly, and are expected to work hard. Parents are concerned about reading homework, and about the quality of information provided in reports. Pupils also say they like school, and that teachers are helpful and supportive when they are in any difficulty. Pupils are unhappy about the toilets, which need renovating.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Increase the time available for teaching and its allocation to different subjects, including making more provision for pupils' cultural development

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average at the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' independent writing in English is confident, and most pupils present their written work well in other subjects
- Pupils with special educational needs do well when given extra help, but make insufficient progress in lessons when their needs are not provided for
- Pupils are making insufficient progress in aspects of their work in art, design and technology and religious education because of a lack of time for these subjects
- Pupils do well in physical education

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (26.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.9 (27.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 97 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. The Year 6 test results were average in English and mathematics in 2003, compared to schools nationally. The results were below average in science, and lower than in previous years. However, the results in all three subjects were better than those gained in 1998, at the time of the last inspection, and the overall trend is of an improvement in line with the national trend. Compared to schools in which pupils had gained similar results in their Year 2 tests, the English and mathematics results were also average, which indicated that the pupils had achieved satisfactorily. In science, the results were below average, and pupils did less well than in schools with similar Year 2 results.
2. The standards attained by pupils now in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. As the Year 6 pupils' attainment at the start of Year 3 was also average, they have achieved satisfactorily during their time in the school. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are also achieving satisfactorily. Although the standard of the younger pupils' work is below the expectations for their age, this reflects the continuing decline in the overall level of attainment on entry to Year 3 and a rise in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
3. Throughout the school, the quality of pupils' work in science has improved as a result of recent revisions to the curriculum and to the way the subject is being taught. In general, though, pupils do less well in the investigative areas of mathematics and science than in learning new knowledge and skills, partly because too little time and attention have been paid to these areas of the subjects. In English, and in work in other subjects, pupils' written work is generally neat and accurate. The extra time allocated to English has enabled them to write at some length, successfully and well. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. They do well in reading activities in lessons, but have too little experience of tackling challenging books independently, including for homework.
4. The lessons observed and the evidence from the school's own data indicated that standards are above the national expectation in physical education as this subject is taught well and pupils

make good progress. Pupils also do well in the area of computer-based communication, within information and communication technology (ICT), as more time and attention have been given to this work than to the other areas of the subject. In several other subjects, a lack of time and focus have meant that pupils' progress has been uneven, although overall satisfactory. For example, in design and technology pupils have planned and made products but not done enough work on evaluating them.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress against their specific targets and goals. They do best when they are given extra support and the teaching is appropriately matched to their needs. This happens most often when the pupils are withdrawn from class lessons and given individual support, and also when teaching assistants are deployed to help them in class lessons. At other times, the classwork often takes too little account of these pupils' difficulties, which slows their overall progress.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and values are **good**, and their behaviour and relationships are **very good**. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is **satisfactory** and for their moral and social understanding it is very good. However, opportunities for cultural development are **unsatisfactory** because not enough emphasis is placed on raising awareness of this area of the curriculum. Attendance is satisfactory; it is close to the national average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Behaviour is almost always very good in lessons and around the school
- Relationships are very good; adults and pupils display high levels of mutual respect
- Pupils' self-esteem is promoted successfully by the school's 'self worth' programme
- The school gives insufficient emphasis to promoting pupils' cultural development

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils behave very well. To a large extent, this is because the school's strong moral code is supported by a clearly-stated behaviour policy which is applied consistently. Almost all pupils appreciate the system of rewards, and understand the consequences if they do not behave well. They are confident that if bullying occurs it would be dealt with promptly and effectively, and they understand that everyone should be treated with equal respect. A 'bully box', where pupils can place information confidentially, helps to reduce minor complaints. In the last school year, two boys were excluded for fixed periods, for inappropriate behaviour. The staff work hard to help the few pupils who have behaviour difficulties, and do their best to ensure that inappropriate behaviour does not affect the learning and wellbeing of others. Teachers and support assistants are very supportive and caring of these pupils, as they are of all in the school, with the result that relationships between pupils and staff are very good.

7. The school is good at promoting pupils' personal development and self-confidence. Its central concept is 'self worth', and the initial letters of this phrase are used as an aide-memoire to emphasise and work on areas which are important – this term, the theme is 'teamwork'. Pupils respond very positively to the way the school promotes their personal development, particularly in moral and social matters. They understand that in a team everyone has a part to play and that this is also the case in school. Each Friday the school holds a 'celebration assembly'. Pupils are proud to be recognised in this assembly, and like the stickers, house points, merits and praise which they receive in their 'achievement' books. The school's atmosphere is calm and orderly, and pupils are polite, confident and friendly. Individual pupils receive good encouragement to develop their strengths and self-esteem. The contribution of pupils of all backgrounds, including those from ethnic minorities and those with particular needs or talents, is valued by staff and pupils.

8. Pupils are enthusiastic about school, and settle quickly to work. They feel that their teachers are kind and helpful. In lessons, pupils show respect for others' views by listening attentively to each other as well as to the teacher, which has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils with learning

difficulties form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other, and their confidence and self esteem increase as a result of the individual help they are given. Adults are good role models and ensure that pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, handle resources with care and respect the school premises. In the playground pupils play happily with each other and no one is left out.

9. Personal, social and health education and citizenship make a strong contribution to pupils' social and moral development. The provision for these aspects of pupils' development is very good. The promotion of pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum, but overall the attention paid to extending pupils' cultural awareness is unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to explore their own and other cultures, for example through art, music, literature and dance. Partly, this is because of the lack of curricular time for the creative and aesthetic areas of the curriculum.

10. The school's procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are good. Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to school and to lessons, most of which start on time. However, a minority of parents take their children on holiday in term time. This affects overall levels of attendance, which would otherwise be good.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/2003**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1%	School data	0.3%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.4%

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Exclusions**

**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	324	4	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The school is most successful in promoting pupils' personal development and welfare. It is now working on raising academic standards through improvements to teaching and learning, the curriculum and the use of assessment information.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with stimulating activities is helping pupils in some classes to do well, particularly in Year 6
- Pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and attentiveness in lessons
- The pace of lessons is sometimes rather slow, with activities that keep pupils busy but do not encourage them to think independently
- Teachers make too little use of homework, especially to encourage pupils to read widely
- Pupils with special educational needs do well when suitable work is set and support is provided, but less well in whole-class teaching when the work is not adapted for them

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (14%)	15 (35%)	22 (51%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

11. The teaching throughout the school is characterized by very good relationships between teachers, other adults and pupils. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils' responsiveness and sense of responsibility, including their behaviour in lessons. The pupils respond very well to these expectations. They are happy to work in any groupings, sharing resources amicably and collaborating well in pair and group activities. The pupils take their work seriously. They listen attentively to what their teachers tell them, and settle quickly to individual tasks and group activities. Inappropriate behaviour rarely interrupts lessons, and inattentiveness is usually dealt with quickly and effectively.

12. Good and very good teaching and learning were seen in all year groups but most often in Year 6. In these lessons, the pupils learned well because the activities were stimulating and varied. Teachers started lessons briskly, with activities that engaged the pupils in thinking for themselves. Time was used well, and the activities were adapted to meet the range of needs in the class. The varied activities gave pupils plenty of opportunities for independent work, with support to groups needing extra assistance, and regular feedback and guidance to the whole class. Teachers explained ideas and unfamiliar vocabulary clearly. They asked pupils questions that stimulated thought, and they listened attentively to pupils' responses, building a whole-class discussion and exchange of ideas. The lessons had been planned well, with consideration of exactly what pupils were expected to learn as well as what tasks they would do.

13. All the teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better during the inspection. However, during part of about a third of the lessons, pupils' learning was held back to some degree by a rather slow pace. This was often because the teacher talked for too long and so the pupils had too little time for independent work. Also, teachers did not communicate enough sense of urgency, for example by having a series of short activities that gave pupils much to do in the time available – a technique that was used to good effect in the most successful lessons. Occasionally, the work was easy for the

high-attaining pupils as more challenging, extension activities had not been provided, or it was too difficult for the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. An over-reliance on worksheets, including in mathematics and science, inhibits the development of pupils' skills in independent thinking and problem solving. It also contributes to pupils not having had enough opportunity for investigative work, which is part of the reason for science results having been below average in 2003.

14. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants provide good support when the pupils are given individual help, both in whole-class lessons and when the pupils are withdrawn for one-to-one work on literacy. Their support helps the pupils to achieve well in learning basic skills, especially in reading and writing. However, teachers generally do too little to build on this work in whole-class lessons, and to adapt the activities and resources to meet individuals' needs. Partly, this is because some individual education plans are not sufficiently specific about individuals' needs and what teachers should do to help the pupils.

15. Teachers make some use of homework, but this is inconsistent. Parents commented on this, at the meeting before the inspection and in their questionnaire responses. The most significant weakness in homework provision is that pupils' independent reading is not promoted well enough. Although many pupils enjoy reading and so take books home, this is a matter of their choice rather than teachers' expectation. The lack of guidance in pupils' independent reading leads to pupils tending to choose books that are too easy for them. It also means that opportunities to promote their wider cultural awareness are missed.

16. The school has developed a good system for recording teachers' assessments of the standard of pupils' work. In English and mathematics, this has been tracked from year to year, which is enabling staff to check whether each pupil is making the progress expected. The assessment information has also enabled the school to re-group the pupils into sets for English and mathematics, and for science in Year 6, in relation to their attainment. Teachers' use of the information to identify areas of strength and weakness, to match the work to what pupils need to learn next and to set targets is inconsistent. The marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent. Some marking gives good guidance on how to improve, but more usually the comments give praise but too little feedback on the quality of the work and what to focus on next.

## **The curriculum**

The school's curriculum provides **satisfactory** opportunities for pupils' learning and for enriching their experience. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching pupils in groups according to their attainment (sets) for English and mathematics is helping to raise standards in these subjects
- The time given to lessons is less than in most junior schools, and some subjects have too little time
- The school has good accommodation, particularly for ICT
- The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is good

## **Commentary**

17. The arrangement for teaching pupils in sets for English and mathematics, and science in Year 6, helps the teachers to match the work to the pupils' needs. The three classes in each year are organised into four sets, enabling the pupils with special educational needs to be taught in a comparatively small group. This means that they get good support, which is helping many of them to reach the standard expected for their age. Extra classes for about twenty-five pupils, provided as part of a breakfast club, have helped them do well in the Year 6 tests. Last year, this contributed to most of the lower-attaining pupils gaining Level 4.

18. The introduction of planning based on the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy has helped the school to improve the effectiveness of its teaching of English and mathematics. The school has based its planning for the other subjects on national guidance. The planning is kept electronically. This is a good arrangement as it is enabling teachers to adapt the previous year's work easily, which saves them time. It is also helpful that teachers in each year group plan together, as they draw on each others' expertise and the classes of each year group cover similar work.

19. Some subjects have too little lesson time, and several (particularly English) have a very generous allocation. Where much time in a day is given to a subject, the pace of the work tends to slow down. Subjects that have too little time include art, design and technology, religious education and music. This means that the pupils' work is incomplete, or is not done in enough depth. Some lessons do not start promptly, further reducing learning time. During the inspection, this happened for lessons in ICT, music and religious education.

20. Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The arrangements for providing individual support in literacy and numeracy are good. However, pupils who miss key parts of a lesson when they are withdrawn for extra support are often not given enough assistance to catch up with the rest of the class.

21. The school has a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including citizenship. It makes pupils aware of how to live healthily and gives them a good understanding of how their actions affect others. The provision for sex and drug education is planned to contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Visitors such as the school nurse and community policeman support this work well.

22. Satisfactory enrichment of the curriculum is offered through clubs and other out-of-school activities, including several organised and run by pupils themselves. Participation in sporting activities for the older pupils is high. The range of clubs includes indoor athletics, gymnastics, football, netball and tag rugby. The school is successful in matches and competitions in these sports. Visitors to the school, visits to local places of interest, and a Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight all add to the curriculum and contribute towards the pupils' social development. The curriculum for pupils in Year 6 is broadened by the introduction of French, which is a good preparation for work in secondary schools.

23. The school is well staffed with qualified teachers and knowledgeable teaching assistants. Good use of resources in other subjects helps to make lessons interesting. The accommodation is good, and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In particular, the ICT suite is very good as it has enough computers for each pupil to work independently. This has done much to raise pupils' standards in ICT. The school has plenty of shared areas and rooms where pupils with special educational needs can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in small groups. However, too little use is made of ICT to support these pupils' learning of literacy and numeracy.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school's procedures for the welfare, safety and protection of its pupils are **very good**. The care, support and guidance given to pupils are **satisfactory**. The school makes **good** efforts to involve pupils through questionnaires and the school council.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Much care is taken to ensure pupils' welfare and safety
- The school has very good arrangements for pupils to join the school at the start of Year 3
- The pupils are not as well informed as they should be about how they can improve their work

## Commentary

24. The school is very aware of and responsive to all matters relating to pupils' health, safety and wellbeing. Very good training in child protection has been provided for all staff. Liaison and co-operation with parents and with outside agencies, for example social services, is very effective when pupils have personal difficulties. Health and safety are monitored rigorously, and procedures to protect pupils when using the Internet are very secure. Pupils are supervised very well throughout the day. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' safety as well as encouraging strong relationships between pupils and their teachers. Pupils have a good understanding of what is acceptable at school. They know the staff well, are confident in approaching them, and know that they will be listened to. The standards of care are very good, which contributes to the school's positive ethos.

25. Pupils are involved in agreeing school and class rules. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to put forward their ideas about what is important to them. Recently, they have contributed to the improvements to the outside playground. The school council has also raised an issue that concerns many pupils: the state of the toilets. The school recognises this as a valid concern, and plans to renovate the toilets fairly soon.

26. Procedures for introducing pupils to the school are very good. They involve meetings and visits to the school by the child and the parents. Teachers collaborate well with the adjacent infant school, attend their productions and invite its pupils to productions at the junior school. These contacts enable new pupils to settle into Year 3 very well, and parents are very pleased with this aspect of the school's work. New pupils are helped by an older 'buddy' when they arrive, which pupils say is very helpful. The school also has good links with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils have an induction day and join in with other feeder schools for 'bridging' visits. There are taster days and other activities, teachers from the secondary schools visit Year 6, and curricular and other records are passed on.

27. The school is good at providing advice and guidance in relation to pupils' personal development. As part of the positive relationships and caring ethos, staff are also generally alert to pupils' learning needs and do their best to support them. However, until recently the school has paid too little attention to helping pupils know how to improve the quality of their work, including through informative marking. A recent improvement is that pupils in some classes are now being involved in discussions about their academic achievements, including having targets set to guide the next steps in their learning.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. Its links with other schools are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are generally pleased with the school
- The school has not done enough to involve parents in their children's learning
- Links with other schools are good

## Commentary

28. Most parents are generally pleased with the care and education their children receive. The questionnaires, which were returned by parents of over half the pupils, identify many strengths. Almost all the parents say their children like school, behave well and are making good progress. They say that the teaching is good, the staff expect hard work and treat their children fairly, and that children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents also feel that the school is well led and managed. Areas of concern are that the school does not do enough to seek parents' views and that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress. Also, parents raised concerns about the provision of homework, particularly reading.

29. The inspection found that the school is much better at liaising with parents on their children's welfare and personal matters than in relation to their education. Annual reports do not give enough information on how well pupils are doing and what they should focus on to improve (the school already has reports under review) and the promotion of independent reading at home is not good enough. However, the inspection found that the other information provided to parents is satisfactory as it is similar to that provided by most schools. The school makes reasonable efforts to find out about parents' concerns, through governor's attendance at parents' evenings and by inviting comments.

30. Parents' willingness to support their children's learning and their education is illustrated by the success of the Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA). It raises substantial funds to supplement the school's provision. Last year £10,000 was donated towards playground work, which have much improved the outdoor facilities. Attendance at open evenings is high, and newsletters regularly inform parents about what is happening. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved in identifying their needs and providing support. They are well informed and are generally supportive. They speak highly of the support their children receive.

31. Links with the local community are satisfactory. Local people visit regularly to work with pupils and to contribute to assemblies, and the summer fete is a shared event. These opportunities enhance the provision for involvement in the community. The provision for pupils transferring to the local secondary schools and links with the adjacent infant school are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher's leadership is **good**. The management of the school is satisfactory, and the school day runs smoothly. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school, which have been translated into good improvement in the last two years
- Good systems have been set up for leading and managing the school's work, although they have yet to have the full impact intended by the headteacher

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher has provided a strong sense of direction and clear vision for the school. This has resulted in a significant change in the way the school works. He has turned it into a school which cares very well for its pupils and which has a good ethos. The school is now focusing on raising academic standards, with the beginnings of success. The staff work well as a team, and share the headteacher's commitment to improvement.

33. The senior staff support the headteacher well, particularly in the areas of monitoring and improving teaching and learning, introducing an assessment system, and managing staff training. However, nobody has had a specific, overall responsibility for the curriculum, and so its weaknesses at whole-school level have not been fully recognised. Subject leaders provide sound leadership and management in their areas, with several subjects now being led well. The provision for special educational needs is managed satisfactorily. Administrative staff provide good support, which enables the school day to run smoothly. The school budget is managed efficiently.

34. The headteacher has accurately identified the school's major strengths and weaknesses, and has successfully led its improvement since his appointment. Good systems have now been set up and are being implemented. The school improvement plan is clear about areas for development and who is responsible for managing them, but does not cover all that the school has been working on as it omits the school's recent initiatives to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the headteacher and key staff are clear about which aspects of English, mathematics

and science need development, and have a sound understanding of which groups of pupils are most in need of additional support. For instance, setting arrangements were introduced to help provide more challenge to higher-attaining pupils and to ensure that the work meets the needs of lower-attaining pupils well. The school has not yet focused enough on checking how successful the recent improvements are, in relation to raising pupils' achievement.

35. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its legal duties. The relationship between governors and senior staff is business-like. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and are very supportive of its development. They are prepared to take difficult decisions. For example, they have looked at how to respond to the current fall in the school roll, which is reducing the school's income. The governing body recognises that it does not yet focus enough on finding out about how successful the school is in relation to pupils' learning and achievement.

**Financial information**

*Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	847,370
Total expenditure	854,610
Expenditure per pupil	2,322

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	72,426
Balance carried forward to the next	65,186

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good opportunities for independent writing, and achieve well in this area of the subject
- Teachers do too little to promote pupils' independent reading through reading at home
- Marking often gives pupils too little guidance on how to improve their work

##### **Commentary**

36. The results in English at the end of Year 6 are average, both in relation to all schools nationally and to schools in which the pupils had gained similar results at the end of Year 2. Standards now attained by pupils in Year 6 are also average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but better in their writing, speaking and listening than in their reading.

37. The school has provided considerable amount of lesson time for English, including about two hours extra each week for literacy-related activities. The purpose is to give pupils more opportunities for independent writing, and for a breadth of English work. The result is that pupils have plenty of time for writing, and have made good gains in this aspect of the subject. By Year 6, most are confident writers who have tackled a variety of interesting tasks. Often, a practical approach is used, to give the pupils ideas for what to say in their writing. For example, during the inspection, teachers made good use of speaking and listening activities to prepare for the written task, when Year 6 pupils worked out arguments for and against fox hunting. The work was adapted for the pupils in different sets, and imaginative teaching enabled both the higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to get a lot out of the lessons. They identified the arguments that different groups of people might make, and the higher-attaining pupils gained a clear understanding of strategies for success in arguing.

38. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, and expect them to work hard. Pupils find the work interesting, and respond thoughtfully in whole-class discussion. They also work very well in small groups, sharing resources and ideas. However, in some lessons the pupils spent too long listening to whole-class discussion, which slowed the pace of their learning even though they enjoyed hearing what the teacher told them. The pace at which pupils worked also tended to slow down after the first hour of work in English, although they remained generally positively motivated. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent. Some work is commented on well, with clear guidance on how to improve next time, but the marking of much other work gives praise rather than constructive advice.

39. Although the school worked successfully to raise results in reading in last summer's Year 6 tests, teachers have not focused on ensuring that all pupils read widely. Pupils do not have to take books home, and those who choose to do so sometimes read books that are too easy. The lack of guidance and effective liaison with parents (for example by means of a home-school dialogue in pupils' reading record books) means that the older, higher-attaining pupils have not been moved on from popular children's fiction to tackling more demanding literature. Some younger pupils are reading more challenging books at home than at school.

40. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as is its improvement since the last inspection. The next steps for development have been recognised, and the standard of pupils' reading and writing has been improved by the changes made over the last couple of years.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities for developing their skills in language and literacy in other subjects, even though the school has not planned explicitly for these. Teachers are generally good at making sure that pupils understand key vocabulary in the different subjects. Well-presented written work is expected and generally obtained, although the over-use of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to learn how to record their findings independently.

## French

42. French is taught in Year 6, for half an hour a week. The teaching and learning in the lesson observed was satisfactory. The pupils were very attentive to an activity on giving directions to places as the teacher made the work fun. However, too much of the lesson was conducted in English, and the pupils had too few opportunities to speak French.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching, particularly in Year 6 where the pupils are re-organised into sets, is helping to raise standards
- Pupils' skills in investigation are not well developed because of an over-reliance on worksheets
- Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously as they move through the school
- The marking of pupils' work provides too little guidance on how to improve in future
- ICT is used well to develop pupils' understanding in mathematics

### Commentary

43. Overall, the standard pupils attain in mathematics is in line with national expectations, and the results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 were average in 2003. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout their time at the school. Work seen during the inspection indicated that pupils in Year 6 are now achieving well. In particular, more pupils are working at Level 5 than in previous years. This is due to the re-arrangement of the three Year 6 classes into four sets, which allows for smaller classes and for the work to be more closely matched to pupils' attainment. Pupils learn the basic mathematical skills well, and a good emphasis on mental calculations helps pupils to complete a lot of work in lessons. However, much work is already set out for pupils on worksheets or involves practice exercises copied from text books. This means that pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own mathematical strategies and to try out their ideas when solving problems.

44. Teaching and learning are good. Some very good lessons were seen during the inspection, particularly in Year 6. Use of the National Numeracy Strategy is well established, and pupils' learning is systematically built upon. Teachers plan mental activities well, which make the start of lessons fun. Pupils respond very well and almost all pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and work hard. Relationships are very good. Teachers are committed to helping pupils to improve their work, and all are fully included in lessons. Teachers explain tasks clearly and lessons are well organised, so there is a good balance between the teacher talking and pupils working. Basic skills are well taught, but teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and skills to investigate and reason independently. In most lessons, the time at the end of the lesson is used well to review what has been learned and for the teachers to make note of which pupils need more help and those who achieve well. In the best lessons, teachers followed this up by working with those who needed extra help. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on how well they have understood a lesson and to ask for further help if they need it. However, although marking of their written work is conscientious, it is not used consistently to demonstrate to pupils how they can improve.

45. The improvement in mathematics since the last inspection is satisfactory. The subject is well led and managed. Recently, the improvement has been good because of successful action to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is beginning to lead to a rise in standards and

pupils' achievement. As more remains to be done for the pupils to achieve well, the overall provision in this subject is satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

46. The school makes satisfactory provision to improve pupils' understanding of mathematics in other subjects. Some ICT lessons involve work in mathematics, giving pupils good opportunities to practise their skills in both subjects. The pupils enjoy these sessions, and work hard. However, the use and development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is not specifically planned for, and so opportunities for making productive links are sometimes missed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving as a result of purposeful subject leadership
- Teachers now place a good emphasis on developing the pupils' investigational skills
- Pupils have had too few opportunities for working independently

### **Commentary**

47. Results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average, and below average when compared with similar schools. This was because the proportion of pupils who attained Level 5 was lower than in schools nationally, although the proportion who gained Level 4 or better (which is the level expected at the end of Year 6) was at the national average. Science results have fallen over the last three years, but are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory. The standard pupils are now attaining in Year 6 is in line with the expectations for their age. The reason for the improvement in standards is that the headteacher has recently taken over leadership of the subject and has provided a more rigorous approach to teaching the subject. Teachers' expectations of the work pupils should be doing have been raised. More practical experiments and investigations are now carried out, and this has led to pupils having better scientific knowledge, skills and understanding. The improvement is reflected in pupils' written work throughout the school, and in the searching questions asked by teachers in the lessons observed. For example, Year 6 pupils were involved in playing a game where each pupil took the part of a plant or animal and had to describe their position in the food chain. As a result, they learned a great deal about consumers and producers in the plant and animal world. Activities like this and the investigative approach now adopted mean that pupils enjoy science lessons and are keen to learn.

49. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully for lessons, making sure that what pupils are expected to learn is clear. Teachers ensure pupils' understand the correct scientific vocabulary, and quickly correct their mistakes. This also helps improve pupils' literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to record their work successfully as they are given writing guidelines that help them to organise and present their work correctly. However, the guidelines used with average and higher-attaining pupils limits the development of their skills in explaining their conclusions to experiments independently and in depth. ICT is not used systematically enough to support learning in science. Marking of written work is too variable. Some teachers provide informative comments but other pupils are given too little guidance on what they need to do next.

50. Science is well led and managed, with a clear direction for improvement during the past year. Pupils in Year 6 are now taught in sets (classes of pupils with similar attainment) with the aim of improving the number of pupils attaining Levels 4 and 5 in the national tests. Those with special educational needs are taught in a smaller set, which is giving teachers good opportunities to work with individuals and so help them reach Level 4. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although information gathered is not always being used effectively to plan the next stages in pupils' learning. Overall, the improvement in science since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching is enabling pupils to do well in the area of computer-based communication
- The resources and technical support for ICT work are very good
- Some ICT work, not based in the computer room, is unproductive

### **Commentary**

51. The standard attained by the end of Year 6 is in line with the national expectation, with a strength in the area of computer-based communication. Discussions with pupils in Years 4 and 6 showed that they have done most work in this area. For example, the younger pupils have selected computer graphics and added them to text competently. The Year 6 pupils' multimedia sequences showed that they have a good understanding of how to use the facilities of the programme. The evidence indicates that too little time has been spent on other areas of the subject, although the resources to cover these areas have been obtained during the last year and are now being used. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

52. The teaching and learning in the lessons observed were good. The pupils were keen to work, and concentrated very well. They showed good skills in using the keyboard and mouse, and in navigating the programs. The high-quality ICT facilities helped them considerably, as each had a computer to work at. Lessons are well staffed. A full-time ICT technician supports the class teachers, which means that pupils get help very quickly and that technical problems do not interrupt the teaching.

53. Worksheets indicate that pupils in Years 3 and 4 have spent too long on preparing for computer-based work, doing unproductive tasks such as colouring in repeated patterns. This is partly because links with what is taught in other subjects have not been planned for systematically. Careful records are kept of how well pupils have done in the units of work covered. However, the pupils' written work contains very few print-outs of their ICT work as it is stored electronically. This makes it difficult for teachers to review pupils' progress over time and across the whole of the ICT curriculum, and for pupils to learn from looking back at their previous work.

54. ICT is led and managed satisfactorily. Its improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, and good in the last two years. Staff training has helped to raise teachers' awareness of the potential of ICT and knowledge of how to teach it successfully. The ICT room, which was set up three years ago, has enabled the school to provide pupils with regular opportunities to use computers.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

55. The provision for ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils in all classes have regular, timetabled opportunities to work in the ICT room, and this work draws on their learning in other subjects. The ICT lessons contribute most to mathematics, with some links to English, history and art. However, other subjects make too little use of ICT.

## HUMANITIES

No **history** lessons were seen during the inspection and so it is not possible to judge provision, nor the quality of teaching and learning. Previous work and other evidence indicates that standards are broadly in line with expectations. Work is planned at appropriate levels for pupils' ages, against national guidelines. This ensures all topics are covered and that historical skills are built on systematically. The subject is linked with art in drawing, painting and model making and with geography in mapping skills. This was evident in a study of Larkfield today and one hundred years ago. ICT is used satisfactorily to research topics. Work in history supports English through opportunities to write for a range of purposes, discuss topics and learn specific vocabulary.

### Geography

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strength

- Pupils are gaining a good awareness of environmental issues

#### Commentary

56. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in developing their geographical knowledge and skills, and standards are in line with the expectations for the end of Year 6.

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lessons seen, pupils particularly enjoyed learning about environmental issues, a topic which is contributing well to the development of their awareness of social issues. Year 4 pupils considering air pollution related this well to a historical study of London suffering from smog. Year 5 pupils responded well to the question of who owns water. The teacher gained their attention quickly at the start of the lesson by illustrating how water from the Nile is used. This led to a good discussion of the need for control and management of water resources.

58. Geography is led and managed satisfactorily, and its improvement since the last inspection is also satisfactory. The subject supports the development of pupils' skills in English by sound teaching of specific geographical language and by opportunities for discussion. Their mathematical development is helped by work on maps and scale, collecting data from surveys and the graphical representation of findings. However, too little use of ICT is made to support learning in geography.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

#### Main weakness

- Pupils' learning is being limited in some classes by lessons being too short

#### Commentary

59. Standards are in line with those expected in the Kent agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, and the standard of the work seen meets the expectations for Year 6. However, pupils' learning in some classes is currently being affected by the lessons being too short, because of the way the timetable is organised. The result is that the pupils have a secure knowledge of the factual content of the subject, but have not extended their understanding beyond this.

60. In the four lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils were interested in the work and were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences. For example, Year 3 pupils were encouraged to describe special objects that reminded them of friends and family. Teachers use practical activities well to encourage pupils to work collaboratively. However, three lessons started late and so opportunities were lost to teach the subject in any depth. For example, in

a Year 6 lesson pupils used bibles accurately to find the parable of the Good Samaritan. They showed a satisfactory understanding of why Jesus used parables to help people deal with problems and questions in their everyday lives. There was too little time for them to apply what they had learned to their everyday lives, although this had been planned for.

61. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as is its improvement since the last inspection. All classes are now taught religious education each week, which is an improvement. Spiritual awareness is encouraged satisfactorily by the visits of representatives from the local churches. Visits to the local churches also help support the pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and the use and meaning of religious objects.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

No **art** lessons were seen during the inspection, and so it is not possible to judge provision, or the quality of teaching and learning. Only a limited amount of previous work was available to the inspectors, and so judgements about standards could not be made across the full range of the art curriculum. Examples of good work were seen in Year 3. In their work on relationships, the pupils had looked closely at the painting "Child with a Dove" by Pablo Picasso. They had noticed how carefully the child is holding the dove, and successfully painted the picture themselves. Work in Year 6 includes some attractive watercolour landscapes.

The curriculum is now planned against national guidelines, with an emphasis on drawing and painting. The school recognises a need to be more adventurous, but at the moment art is not given enough time for pupils to experience a wide range of activities. This limits the contribution art makes to pupils' cultural development.

No lessons in **design and technology** were seen and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. However, discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work indicated that standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations, and that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 6 have recently investigated shelters, and have made accurate designs that they described well. The use of writing guidelines has helped pupils with special educational needs to explain the qualities of their designs. However, pupils have had too few opportunities to learn how to evaluate what they plan and make, as too little time has been available for this.

Only one lesson was seen in **music**, in Year 6. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgment about provision in this subject. The Year 6 pupils showed a sound knowledge of musical terms and understood how to use music to represent different moods. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to extend their learning through lunchtime clubs such as recorders and choir.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good
- There are good extra-curricular opportunities for the older pupils, but too few opportunities for the younger pupils to participate in sport outside lessons
- Pupils do well in competitive sport

## **Commentary**

62. From discussions with teachers and pupils, it is evident that all strands of the physical education curriculum are regularly taught. A good range of extra-curricular clubs for the older pupils enhances their learning experiences, but clubs not available for younger pupils. In the three dance lessons seen, the quality of pupils' movements and the control of their bodies indicated that overall standards are above the expectation for the pupils' age, and that they achieve well.

63. The teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed. An important feature that contributed to the success of the teaching was the strong emphasis on evaluating pupils' performance and presentation. Teachers had good knowledge of the subject and expected good-quality movement. Pupils moved imaginatively to the music and collaborated well when building up sequences. Their attitudes were consistently very good, and they demonstrated great interest in their lessons. Overall, resources for physical education are good, and they are used well.

64. Pupils are encouraged to take part in the sporting activities. Their badges show that many reach a good standard in several sports. This is why the school is successful in both local and county competitions. Physical education is well led and managed, and detailed planning provides for pupils to make good progress from year to year. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Three lessons in **personal, social and health education** (PSHE) were observed, including circle time. The lessons were taught **well**, with activities that engaged pupils' interest. Year 3 pupils' views on what is nice about playtime were sought in a sensitively-managed discussion that helped the pupils to see how to resolve difficulties. Year 6 pupils learned about strategies for saying no, when under pressure from other people. This lesson involved role-play, which the pupils enjoyed. They were challenged to think the issues through in a mature way, with **good** links between the moral and social message given and pupils' own lives and experience. Aspects of **citizenship** are covered within PSHE, but these were not observed during the inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*