

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chatham

LEA area: The Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118756

Headteacher: Mr P J Reid

Lead inspector: Mr P Sudworth

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 December 2003

Inspection number: 257874

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | Primary                          |
| School category:             | Voluntary aided                  |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 – 11                           |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                            |
| Number on roll:              | 368                              |
| School address:              | Hills Terrace<br>Chatham<br>Kent |
| Postcode:                    | ME4 6PX                          |
| Telephone number:            | (01634) 842 922                  |
| Fax number:                  | (01634) 407 445                  |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                   |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Rev. C W Baker                   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 September 1998                |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average two-form entry primary school with 14 classes, situated close to the centre of Chatham, has 368 boys and girls on roll aged 4 to 11 years. There are 42 more girls than boys and the imbalance is particularly pronounced in Years 2, 4 and 5. Whilst most pupils are of white British heritage, just over one-third of the pupils are from other ethnic groups. Sixty-five of these pupils have English as an additional language and are supported by an ethnic minority grant. Seventeen of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. About three-quarters of the pupils come from the area around the school, much of which contains older, terraced properties. The percentage of parents who apply for free school meals is average and the uptake is increasing as a result of better kitchen facilities. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Eighty-eight pupils have special educational needs and include pupils with learning, social, emotional and behavioural problems and speech and communication difficulties. They include two pupils who have statements because they have more profound learning problems. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the start of the academic year is about average. Overall, the attainment of the pupils on entry is below average. During the inspection, one member of staff was absent on maternity leave.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |              |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| 2700                           | P Sudworth   | Lead inspector | Geography;<br>Music;<br>Physical education;<br>Personal, social and health education;<br>English as an additional language. |
| 9457                           | G Bindoff    | Lay inspector  |   |
| 30033                          | M Wright     | Team inspector | English;<br>Art and design;<br>Design and technology.   |
| 23354                          | E Adams      | Team inspector | Science;<br>Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.  |
| 32941                          | R. D. Harber | Team inspector | Mathematics;<br>Information and communication technology;<br>History;<br>Special educational needs.                         |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Michael's RC Primary school provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils but nevertheless there are serious weaknesses in its leadership and management, which result in a lack of consistency in important aspects of the school's work, such as assessment arrangements and the monitoring of standards of work.** Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well. However, they do not make a consistent rate of progress as they move up through the school because of inconsistencies in both the quality of teaching, which is nevertheless satisfactory overall, and unsatisfactory assessment arrangements. The trend of results in national tests is below that nationally at ages seven and 11. Results at age 11 have been well below average for the past few years. Pupils have been doing better in the infants than in the juniors. Currently overall standards are broadly average. They are above average in singing, in which pupils achieve well, but below average in writing in which pupils underachieve. The school currently provides unsatisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and singing but standards are not high enough by Year 6 in written English, particularly for boys.
- Leadership is not rigorous enough in ensuring that the school's management systems are effective.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- Assessment is weak and lacks a sufficiently whole-school approach.
- The teaching in Years 2 and 6 and part of Year 4 and for pupils with special educational needs is good but it is occasionally unsatisfactory, particularly in Year 3 and for some pupils at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- Too many poor quality worksheets are used in parts of the school and there is not always a good enough match to pupils' capabilities.
- Provision in physical education in the foundation stage is unsatisfactory.
- Staff work very well as a team and relationships are good throughout the school; staff care very well for the pupils, although some aspects relating to health and safety and child protection are not rigorous enough.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.

The school has made **unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection**. Attainment in English at age 11 is not as high as previously reported but it is higher in ICT and music, in which pupils make better progress than they did. Pupils still do not have enough opportunities to work independently and assessment procedures are still a matter of concern because record keeping systems are not good enough to help monitor pupils' progress effectively. Schemes of work are now in place. The challenge for more able pupils is apparent in some lessons in mathematics and English, but not as frequently in other subjects. Portfolios of assessed work are now in place. The governing body has improved its financial planning arrangements. Leadership and management are not as effective in the monitoring of standards and in ensuring school policies and systems are carried out.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2001        | 2002 | 2003 | 2003            |
| English   | E           | E    | E    | E               |
| Mathematics   | E           | E    | E    | E*              |
| Science   | E           | E    | E    | E               |

*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.*

**Pupils' current achievements are satisfactory overall but with some variation in different aspects of work.** Children achieve well in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their mathematical and personal and social development in the reception classes but underachieve in their physical development. Most reception children reach the goals that the children are expected to attain by the end of the reception year, except in their physical development. The current groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are more capable than last year. Pupils achieve soundly overall in Years 1 and 2 and they generally achieve well in reading and mathematics, although boys in the main in the past have not done as well as the girls in reading and writing and this pattern continues. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, although inconsistent. Past results indicate underachievement in Years 3 to 6 and results in 2003 in mathematics compared to their attainment in Year 2 were in the lowest five per cent in the country. This is partly accounted for by population movement with some more capable pupils moving out of the school and being replaced by pupils with special educational needs, but inconsistencies in teaching quality also apply. Pupils are currently achieving well in ICT and singing throughout the school and generally soundly overall by age 11 in most aspects of English, except in writing, in which their achievement is unsatisfactory. They make generally sound achievement in mathematics, although several pupils lack sharpness in calculation skills. Pupils achieve soundly in science. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress but the lack of planning for some pupils at a very early stage of learning English impedes their progress in learning English.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development are nurtured well.** Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well. They enjoy their work and try hard. The provision for pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is **good** and satisfactory for their cultural development. Pupils are punctual and attendance is **satisfactory** but a few families bring down the average rate of attendance significantly.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides an **acceptable quality of education, although there are some serious weaknesses.** Whilst the overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory** and many lessons are taught well, inconsistencies in quality affect the evenness of pupils' progress. The **unsatisfactory** assessment arrangements do not ensure that the work is always well matched to the pupils' capabilities and adversely affect the levels of attainment that the pupils reach in some areas of work, such as writing. The curriculum is **satisfactory** with strengths in music and ICT and weaknesses in physical education in the foundation stage and written English in Years 3 to 6. There are some good opportunities for enrichment through after school activities. Satisfactory arrangements are made for pupils' welfare, health and safety and staff show much care for the pupils. There are good links with parents and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Both the leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory** because the systems for ensuring consistency of practice and in monitoring standards and quality are not rigorous enough. Whilst the effectiveness of subject leadership is satisfactory in the main, the management aspect of this work is often unsatisfactory because procedures are not thorough enough in improving pupils' attainment in different subjects. The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in the meeting of some statutory requirements in the production of required policies.

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

**Parents** hold very positive views of the school and state that their children are making good progress. **Pupils** enjoy school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in the school.
- Improve standards of work in written English, paying particular attention to improving the progress of boys.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of work and take more effective action on the findings.
- Improve and co-ordinate whole-school record keeping and assessment systems so that there is much more consistency and better use made of the information.
- Develop a whole-school approach and more effective provision for pupils who are at a very early stage of learning English.
- Improve the provision for physical development in the foundation stage.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 **achieve well** in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in reading but **underachieve** in writing, particularly the boys. Standards in English, mathematics and science are **broadly average** in Year 2. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are **broadly average**, although significant numbers of pupils lack accuracy and sharpness in calculation skills. Their attainment in science is **average**. Pupils show **average** skills in ICT. Pupils with special educational needs, most pupils with English as an additional language and those who show a special talent **achieve soundly**. Some pupils at a very early stage of learning English do not receive enough skilled support and do not make the progress that they should.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment in singing is above average.
- The trend of results in national tests by ages seven and 11 has been below average and pupils have been underachieving against their prior attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve well enough in writing, particularly boys.
- The children do not make enough progress in their physical development in the foundation stage.
- Pupils who have very little English do not make enough progress because there are no specific written plans to meet their needs.

#### Commentary

1. When pupils enter school at age four, the attainment of many children is below that expected in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their personal and emotional development. The children achieve well in the reception classes in these aspects and also in their mathematical development because of the very secure environment provided by the teachers and the solid, yet not inspirational, beginning provided for their education. The very good relationships help the children to settle in well and develop good attitudes to their work. As a result, many children are on track to reach the expected standard by the end of the reception year in their communication, language and literacy work, mathematics, their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, and personal and social development. The children are underachieving in their physical development, however, because of the unsatisfactory provision and are unlikely to reach the expected standard in this area of their learning. Pupils achieve soundly in their creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. The recent history of results in national tests at the end of Year 2 has been below average and the results have not been improving in line with the national trend. Nevertheless, Year 2 results have usually been average in reading and occasionally above average. This is a comparative strength. By contrast, results in mathematics have consistently been below average and occasionally well below the average picture nationally. Results in writing have sometimes been average and sometimes below. In 2003, one-fifth of the seven-year-olds did not reach the expected level for their age in reading, and approximately one-quarter in writing and mathematics. Year 2 girls have been performing better than the boys in reading and writing by more than the national differences.
3. The trend of results at the end of Year 6 has also been below that nationally. Results for the past three years have been well below average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with their performance in Years 1 and 2, Year 6 pupils have not been achieving well enough and much less well than schools with similar results at age seven. On occasion, results have been in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country in English and mathematics in this respect. In 2003, just over one-third of the Year 6 pupils did not reach the expected level in English, half in mathematics and about one in seven in science. Year 6

boys have been doing significantly less well than girls in English and the gap is much wider than that nationally. Boys have been doing better than the girls in mathematics on average but both have performed significantly less well than boys and girls nationally. Pupils have been losing ground between Years 3 and 6 compared to the results obtained in Year 2, particularly the boys in English and the girls in mathematics. This is partly explained by the fact that the school tends to lose some of its more capable pupils in Years 3 to 6 because of demographic trends and the pupils who replace them tend not to be as capable. Several of the replacements have had special educational needs and this has partly been responsible for the less favourable results at age 11, compared to those at age seven. There are additional factors, such as the greater range of teaching quality in Years 3 to 6 and inadequate record keeping systems. The current groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are more capable on the whole than their counterparts last year and this accounts for some improvements in standards, though standards in writing and in aspects of both mathematics and science remain problematic, particularly in the juniors. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is not as high as reported at the previous inspection.

- 4 Currently standards in English are broadly average in Year 2 with pupils' reading skills being stronger than their skills in writing. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in reading and soundly in writing. In Year 6, pupils' skills in English are overall below average, though many reach the expected level, particularly in reading. Writing is weaker and overall below average. Speaking and listening skills are generally average throughout the school. Overall, achievement in English in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory in writing.
- 5 In mathematics, standards of Year 2 pupils' work are average and they are broadly average in Year 6. Pupils' rates of progress have been helped by a Local Education Authority initiative. Currently, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics and soundly in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, several pupils in each year group in the juniors still lack sharpness in mental calculation and accuracy in written computation and this is affecting overall standards in mathematics. Most pupils are reaching national expectations in scientific knowledge in both Years 2 and 6 and achieve soundly but their investigational skills could be better developed.
- 6 Pupils achieve well in ICT and reach the expectations for ages seven and 11. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory. The improvement is due to better resources and more confident teaching. There has also been improvement in design and technology with an increased attention to the design element and pupils' attainment now meets expectations. They also meet expectations in art and design and history. Pupils' performance in singing is above average and this is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy music and derive much pleasure from it. In the two physical education lessons that could be observed, pupils did not make enough progress. This was partly due to problems with the accommodation and equipment but also because of the lack of challenge and the vigour of activity. However, there was not enough evidence to judge attainment in physical education across the school nor to judge attainment and progress in geography.
- 7 Pupils with special educational needs make expected rates of progress and the support they receive is well focused to their learning needs. Appropriate provision is made for higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics, though in some other subjects they frequently do the same work as other pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar rates of progress to the other pupils. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English often make satisfactory progress, especially when they begin the school in the reception classes because they quickly pick up language from other children in their daily activities. However, older pupils who arrive with very little English sometimes struggle because the school has not yet formalised its procedures and provision for dealing with these pupils and some of the extra provision is untrained. As a result, such pupils do not make enough progress because of weaknesses in planning for their needs.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 15.7 (16.7)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| Writing       | 14.1 (14.3)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| Mathematics   | 15.8 (15.5)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |

*There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 24.8 (24.8)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 23.6 (25.0)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 27.0 (26.9)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. **Very good** relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and the adults in the school establish a positive environment for learning. Attendance is below average but punctuality is **satisfactory**. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the large majority of lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and are keen to learn.
  - Pupils' behaviour is very good because expectations are high.
  - Children in the reception class make very good progress in their personal development.
  - Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are very good.
  - Opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. There is no planned programme for pupils' personal development and no systematic recording or monitoring of pupils' personal achievement after the reception year.
  - There is no systematic analysis of attendance data.
8. Pupils' attendance is average and punctuality is satisfactory. However, the attendance of a very small number of pupils has affected the overall attendance figures. The school gives frequent advice to parents about the importance of good attendance and has some good strategies for following up unexplained absences, such as making direct contact with the parents. Pupils are very well known in the school and, as a result, patterns of absence and lateness are identified quickly by class teachers and the administrative staff but there is no analysis of attendance data to contribute to the assessment of pupils' learning and the effectiveness of the school.
9. The school is very successful in encouraging pupils to have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils listen well and sustain their attention, even when lessons are not very inspiring. When teaching is good, pupils are very enthusiastic and are keen to learn, and this contributes to their levels of achievement. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy school life. They particularly enjoy the good range of after-school activities and out-of-school visits.
10. Pupils' behaviour is very good because the school has high expectations and there is a consistent approach to behaviour throughout the school. Pupils are polite and friendly and have the confidence to talk to visitors and to express their views. The school places an emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and has some very good strategies for doing this. Staff have very caring attitudes towards the pupils and provide very good models for the

pupils to follow. As a result, pupils value each other and pupils of all abilities and racial backgrounds mix well together. There have been five exclusions during the past year and these were made to secure good behaviour and prevent the interruption to the other pupils' education. There are no reported cases of continued bullying or racist incidents.

- 11 The social and personal development of pupils in the reception year is very good and is a strength of the school. They learn to listen to each other, to share, to take turns and to work and play together co-operatively. Some very good opportunities are also provided for older pupils to develop social responsibility and moral values. Assemblies, especially, encourage pupils to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. Older pupils develop mature attitudes and enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school. They develop initiative, for example organising fund-raising activities for Children in Need, but do not have enough opportunities to do so. Pupils are keen to develop the effectiveness of the class councils and the school council but these are still at an early stage.
- 12 The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The strong influence of religious faith in the school contributes significantly to these aspects of the pupils' development and to their understanding of the role of faith in people's lives. Broader aspects of pupils' spiritual development are also fostered in the study of the natural world and in the inspirational experience of group singing, which is particularly strong in the school. Pupils really sing their hearts out. In geography, pupils consider the environmental damage caused by development and the effect on natural life.
- 13 Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to gain an understanding of different world cultures. Year 3 pupils have recently studied the patterns and symbols of Australian aboriginal art, but the richness and diversity of cultures within the school community are not fully used to extend pupils' experience.
- 14 The school does not have a cohesive programme for pupils' personal development from Year 1 to Year 6 or systems for evaluating its outcomes and this limits the effectiveness of its provision. The discrimination between boys and girls in the matter of school dress also limits the pupils' social development by reinforcing gender stereotypes.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.8 | School data          | 0   |
| 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** There have been five exclusions during the last academic year. These were enforced to maintain the good standard of school discipline.

**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                                     | 235                  | 5                                 | 0                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 6                    | 0                                 | 1                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 26                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 16                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 4                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 8                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 19                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 12                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 8                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 7                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 16                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 2                    | 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 school provides an acceptable education for its pupils **but with some serious weaknesses** in part of its provision. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment arrangements are **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is generally **broad, and well organised** but with a weakness in physical education in the foundation stage. A wide range of extra-curricular activities supports the pupils' interest in school. The staff take **good** care of the pupils. There are **good** links with the parents and the community.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. The school's assessment systems are **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching in Years 2 and 6 and some lessons in Year 4.
- The good teaching of ICT.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in Year 3 because the work is not always well enough matched to the pupils' capabilities.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory because the systems are inadequate and not sufficiently unified through the school.
- Too much use is made of undemanding and poor quality worksheets.
- Some pupils at a very early stage of learning English are not adequately provided for.

#### Commentary

##### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons*

| Excellent | Very good | Good      | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor    | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| 0 ( 0%)   | 4 (8%)    | 16 ( 31%) | 26 ( 51%)    | 5 ( 10%)       | 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.*

15. The quality of teaching is broadly similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory with some pockets where teaching is frequently good. It is satisfactory in the foundation stage. The teachers of the youngest children establish a good atmosphere that enables the pupils to feel confident. The children settle into school well as a result. Although the teaching in the foundation stage is not always imaginative, it is good for the children's personal and social development. As a result of this, the children make good progress because their confidence is enhanced and their behaviour is good. The children listen attentively and complete the tasks they are asked to do. They enjoy learning and try hard with their work and engage well with other children.
16. Teaching is mostly good in Years 2 and 6 and in part of Year 4. These teachers secure the pupils' respect particularly well. This, together with their good planning and attention to different needs, particularly in English and mathematics in these classes, are major factors in the good progress that the pupils make in these parts of the school. The pace of the lessons in these classes is usually well measured so that the pupils can take in the new learning. The teachers explain the work clearly and prepare the pupils effectively for the activities that are to follow by building up the content in a well structured way.
17. In general throughout the school, the pupils are confident to try and answer the well focused questioning because the relationships are good between the teachers and the pupils. They know that they will not be made to feel awkward if they give a wrong answer because the pupils know that their answers will be valued and they will be praised for trying. In a Year 6 literacy lesson about styles of poetry, with a particular focus on rap, this confidence enabled

the pupils to create rap poetry for themselves. Pupils worked well in pairs and offered to read out their efforts to the others. In a Year 2 lesson, a good explanation from the teacher about how to know whether numbers are odd or even, using pairs of pupils and odd ones out, helped to secure the pupils' understanding. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used a mathematics game to help the pupils with division and encouraged them to calculate using the method they found most useful from a range of methods they had been introduced to.

- 18 Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is sometimes achieved in withdrawal groups. Pupils explain their thinking and learn to correct errors and misconceptions. Support for these pupils is sensitive and well balanced. Particularly good support is provided for pupils with formal statements and staff also show good care in meeting their needs. The teaching assistants, work effectively with pupils who have learning difficulties, and provide good in-class support. However, the seating arrangements in some classes do not help the teaching assistants to talk quietly to groups during the introduction to lessons to make sure that they understand. Pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to work independently and to resolve their own problems, and help is at hand when they need it. Appropriate challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils in most English and mathematics lessons but sometimes in other lessons, the teachers do not consider how the more able pupils are to be extended after the shared part of the lesson.
- 19 The provision for some pupils at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. Whilst such children in the reception classes acquire the language satisfactorily through their daily activities and through play, those who arrive in the school midway through their school career and are taught more formally are not always adequately provided for. Whilst these children are often given adult support, this is sometimes untrained and the activities not always well matched to these children's needs. They then do not make the progress they should. Frequently the support that is provided focuses on helping them with the same tasks that the other pupils have been given and spelling words out for them. The lack of education plans for the pupils with English as an additional language does not help to give a sense of direction to the techniques that need to be employed with pupils who have little understanding of the English language.
- 20 Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Teachers treat all pupils, irrespective of their background and ethnicity, with good levels of care and respect. Pupils try hard in lessons as a result. Teachers share the lesson intentions in appropriate language but much less frequently refer to them at the end to judge the amount of success or remind the pupils of the focus midway through a lesson. Teachers' planning varies considerably in its quality. Some is good with well planned activities for different needs. Some is scrappy and lacks sufficient thought. Overall, the style lacks a consistency of format and rigour. Medium-term plans frequently describe the content rather than the purpose of the learning. Little of the planning shows how the teachers will measure the degree of success that the children experience in their work.
- 21 A few lessons were unsatisfactory. The majority of these were in Year 3 where the quality of teaching in some lessons does not permit the pupils to make the progress that they should. This is because work is not well matched to the pupils' needs. Pupils do not make enough progress in this year group. A very few examples of unsatisfactory teaching were also seen in other parts of the school. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the work is sometimes too difficult, the pace is often slow, the content presented in a dull way or not explained well enough and so the pupils' interest is not secured.
- 22 A failing in many lessons is the imbalance of the time given to the explanation and the activity. Teachers quite often talk for too long and do not engage the pupils in brisk dialogue. They frequently over direct and do not give pupils enough opportunities to be independent and to try things out for themselves by using and developing their own ideas. The challenge in the work in the foundation subjects is sometimes not high enough. In many parts of the school, too much reliance is placed on undemanding worksheets, which require little of pupils' thinking and do not help to develop the pupils' writing skills. Too frequently pupils are given colouring-in activities. These factors affect the pupils' levels of achievement adversely

because they are not appropriately challenged. By contrast, some imaginative teaching was occasionally seen, as when a teaching assistant appeared dressed in a Victorian bathing costume in a Year 5 history lesson. This really stimulated conversation and interest and pupils learned much about Victorian leisure life as a result. Teachers use homework effectively in many instances to follow up class lessons and parents give good support for their children in this.

- 23 The teaching of ICT is good overall, particularly in the suite, although there are some missed opportunities to use computers in classroom settings. Pupils enjoy the sessions in the suite. Whilst there, one pupil, engaged in designing pictures in the style of Mondrian was heard to say 'I am really, really enjoying this lesson'. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of numeracy, as in science, is satisfactory. Teaching of literacy is sound in the main but there is a wide variation in quality from unsatisfactory to very good.
- 24 Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Whilst marking is up to date and some, but not enough, helps the pupils to improve, there is not a common system of marking symbols that the pupils can understand as they progress up through the school. There are some innovative and well thought out records for ICT, which have recently been instituted and help the pupils to know what they can do and what they can aim for in the future. This apart, there is a lack of unified approaches for record keeping and some records are too imprecise, as in mathematics, to assist with the planning for pupils' future learning. Not enough use is made of the information that the teachers do gather to plan for pupils' future learning. English reading records largely comprise a list of the books that the pupils have read. Whilst pupils have whole class targets, pupils do not have sufficiently refined targets to aim for to help them make progress.
- 25 Some good analysis is made of test results to identify areas of work in which the pupils are not doing well. The assessment co-ordinator has begun to track the progress of pupils across the school but this is not yet widespread. The individual education plans are of good quality and help to identify where individual pupils need to improve but little attention is paid to these in lesson plans or the teaching.

## THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is **satisfactory** in its breadth and balance but there is a weakness in the provision for physical development in the foundation stage. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Extra-curricular activities **enrich** pupils' experience of school. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** but accommodation is inadequate in the foundation stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good improvement in ICT since the last inspection.
- Limited large equipment in physical education.
- Unsatisfactory location and use of school library.

### Commentary

26. The curriculum covers satisfactorily the range of subjects required by the National Curriculum as at the time of the last inspection. It is planned soundly to ensure that sufficient time is given to each subject, although there are some inconsistencies between classes in the amount of time given to different subjects because the curriculum is not monitored adequately enough. The quality and provision for children in the foundation stage are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses in the provision for physical development in the reception class due to unsatisfactory accommodation and insufficient use of the outside facility. A greater focus could profitably be given to investigation in science in Years 1 to 6. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils and these are well attended. The school actively participates in local sports tournaments. As part of their

studies in history, geography and science, junior pupils visit places of local interest, such as Horton Kirby and the River Medway. There are some effective links with local businesses that support work in ICT and design and technology.

27. The school has an overall curriculum policy and individual policies for most subjects but their quality varies considerably both with regard to content and presentation. Some lack detail about the school's expectations and standards for the subject. Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating strengths and weaknesses are imprecisely defined in some subject policies, most notably mathematics. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work for all subjects and has begun to look at adapting these schemes to meet its own particular needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is no formal policy for, or co-ordination of, personal, social and health education and so progression is not assured in this aspect of work. The school has decided not to teach sex education formally. The school has a draft policy for race relations.
28. Sound arrangements are made to ensure equality of opportunity in access to the curriculum. All pupils are included in curriculum opportunities, including those who have special educational needs. Pupils who are at a very early stage of learning English sometimes struggle because the school has not yet worked out an adequate strategy that supports them well in all lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well provided for, particularly but not only, in foundation subjects. The strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are satisfactory. The use of mathematics and English across the curriculum are currently unsatisfactory because the school has not sufficiently explored links with other subjects and because of the over-use of poor quality worksheets. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory.
29. Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school are satisfactory. Year 6 pupils make visits to secondary schools and the head teacher meets regularly with staff from the main secondary school that the majority of pupils transfer to. The arrangements for the induction of children into the foundation stage are good. Teachers meet with staff from local play-groups and pre-schools and children make several visits to school during the term before they start. This helps to ensure that children make a positive start to school.
30. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. It is well kept and satisfactory use is made of most of the space that is available. However, some features of the building make it difficult for the school to meet the needs of the curriculum effectively. There are no toilet facilities in the mobile classrooms where several classes are educated. The location of a storage shed in the main school hall restricts the use of the hall for physical education lessons. It also limits the capacity of the hall, making it difficult for the whole school to meet together and this places limits on the types of events that can be held. The foundation stage classrooms are cramped and unsatisfactory and outdoor areas for these children are too small and under-developed, under-resourced and under-used, thereby restricting the range of activities available to the youngest children. The main school library is housed in a temporary classroom, which also houses the computer suite, and is mainly used as a quiet shelter for pupils during lunchtime break. This restricts access and use and results in the library being under-used by staff and pupils.
31. Resources for all subjects, except physical education, are satisfactory. The limited range of large apparatus for physical education restricts the range of activities available to pupils and is unsatisfactory. The library has a limited range of books. This restricts pupils' opportunities to research in the library

## **CARE, GUIDANCE and SUPPORT**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory** but some aspects of the school's procedures for child protection and health and safety need improvement. Monitoring of pupils' progress and the provision of support, advice and guidance in this respect are **unsatisfactory**. **Satisfactory** arrangements are made to involve pupils by seeking their views and acting on them.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and staff have very caring attitudes towards pupils and give some very good individual support.
  - Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
  - Induction arrangements for children in the reception year are good and help them to settle in well.
  - First-aid training for staff is very good.
  - There is not enough staff training in child protection.
  - Governors are not sufficiently involved in provision for child protection and health and safety.
  - Risk assessments for all school activities are incomplete.
  - Assessment of pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and does not give pupils enough information about what they need to do to improve.
32. Judgements in this section broadly echo those made at the last inspection. The school has a strong family atmosphere where pupils are very well known. Parents value the very caring attitudes of staff and say that their children feel happy and secure at school. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good and establish an environment where pupils gain confidence and feel cared for. The school has some very good strategies for nurturing individual pupils, including trained bereavement counselling, which enable pupils to share their concerns and feelings and to develop self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with physical impairments, are given good support, which helps them to take a full part in school life.
33. Provision for child protection is satisfactory overall but there are areas for improvement in staff training and governor involvement so that there is greater contingency cover and awareness. In addition, pupils' opportunities to learn how to protect themselves are limited by the lack of a cohesive programme for personal, social and health education. There are also areas for improvement in the provision for health and safety. Governors have not yet completed risk assessments for all areas of the school's life and work and do not routinely review safety arrangements for out of school visits. However, there is some good practice, including thorough risk assessments for pupils to go swimming. Provision for first-aid training is very good and there are generally good procedures for the treatment of accidental injuries, although the area in the school where treatment is carried out is not very suitable.
34. Pupils entering the reception class are very well supported and make a good start at school. The arrangements to help them settle in are very effective and they adapt quickly to school routines. Expectations about behaviour and how to treat each other are very clear and they respond very well to the calm and orderly environment provided for them. Although there is some good, informal, guidance for older pupils, provision is unsatisfactory overall because pupils are not given enough information to know where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. The lack of formal procedures for assessing pupils' personal development also limits the school's effectiveness in giving useful guidance to pupils.
35. There have been no structured opportunities for pupils to express their views of the school until the recent introduction of a school council and class councils. Pupils are now keen to use these and to put forward their own ideas. At present the school sets the areas for discussion but as the council meetings become more established it is expected that the pupils will have the opportunity to set the agenda themselves. Other opportunities for pupils to contribute their views have not been pursued, including the pre-inspection questionnaire for pupils.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good** and the partnership with parents has some good features. The school is welcoming and friendly and provides some good opportunities for parents to help their children learn at home. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**, whilst those with the community are **good** and some of these enrich pupils' experience.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information for parents of children in the reception year helps them to support their children's learning well.
- The school is friendly and welcoming and parents value the 'open door' approach.
- Parents have good information about the day-to-day life of the school.
- The headteacher holds termly meetings with parents to hear their views.
- Parents have good opportunities to help their children learn in mathematics.
- Some good links with the community support pupils' learning.
- Parents are not actively involved in the daily life of the school.
- Parents do not receive enough information about what their children will learn or about individual learning targets to help their child improve.

## Commentary

- 36 The links with parents and the community are similar to those previously reported. Parents are supportive of the school and value the friendly 'open door' approach. They find it easy to talk to class teachers and to raise concerns. They like the regular opportunities to meet the headteacher and feel that their views are listened to and acted on. However, the scope for parents to contribute to the life of the school is limited because they are not encouraged to be actively involved in pupils' learning, for example, by helping as volunteers in the classroom, and there is no parents' association. The school provides good information about day-to-day events and activities and uses parental help to communicate with parents who do not speak English.
- 37 Parents of children entering the reception year have very good information about what their children will learn and very good guidance about how to help them at home. They have very good informal links with the class teachers and all this good practice helps the children to settle quickly into school and to have good support at home. Parents of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 have some basic information about programmes for learning but not enough detail to make their support effective. However, there is good provision of information about mathematics and very good resources to encourage parents to share mathematics games and tasks with their children. Parents have good opportunities to discuss their child's progress with class teachers and end of year written reports include some useful information. However, parents do not have enough information about the standards their children attain or about detailed learning targets to help them improve.
- 38 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the co-ordinator and close links between home and school support these pupils' learning. There is scope to improve opportunities for parents to be more closely involved in the review of pupils' individual education plans.
- 39 Links with the community enrich pupils' experience. There is a close relationship with the parish and parents are invited to share in school masses. Visitors to the school contribute to pupils' experience of the arts through live performance of music and drama. There is an innovative link with Gillingham Football Club, which improves pupils' football skills but also supports pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy through a 'Fantasy Football' activity.
- 40 The school makes a good effort to contact local pre-school providers to share information about children entering the reception year and has a useful relationship with the neighbouring day nursery. These links contribute to the children's smooth transfer to school. Good links are also established with a local secondary school, which help pupils become familiar with the school before they enter Year 7. In particular, there are very good links between the co-ordinators for special educational needs, which help pupils to make a good start to their secondary education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**. The leadership of key staff, other than the headteacher, is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher establishes a good ethos for learning of the school but does not ensure consistency in policy and practice.
- Subject leaders are not consistently using assessment and data analysis to help to raise standards.
- Management at all levels is not doing enough to raise standards.

### Commentary

- 41 The governing body is soundly led and fulfils its statutory responsibilities, though currently its policy for race relationships and discrimination legislation is only in draft form. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their informal visits and from the information they receive from the headteacher. The governing body has a good structure of committees, which helps it to organise its work and it holds the headteacher to account for the decisions that are taken by challenging some of the decisions. The governing body is aware of its role as a critical friend and its work is better than it was at the previous inspection.
- 42 The headteacher sets a good tone for the school and this is reflected particularly in the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes and in the very good relationships and teamwork, which are some of the school's strengths. The one assembly he conducted during the inspection was purposeful and gripped the pupils' attention. Members of the senior management team regularly monitor lessons and identify areas for improvement, but this has not had a significant effect on raising standards. This is because there is not enough rigour in the follow-up and in ensuring a consistency of approaches across the school, for example in record keeping systems and in the challenge and match of work to pupils' capabilities. For three years, standards at age 11 have been well below those nationally and efforts to reverse this trend have met with only partial success. Lessons are not always focused sharply enough with high enough expectations nor always with a sufficiently good pace. Record systems are not precise enough nor do they provide a coherent enough structure to monitor individual pupils' progress in detail across the school in order to raise standards.
- 43 A major weakness in the school is the lack of consistency in implementing policies, which are frequently undated and lack review dates. Good practice has not been shared well enough. As a consequence, the quality of teachers' planning, record keeping and assessment varies widely. Analysis of data has not led to improved performance in national tests by age 11. Whilst the school improvement plan is of satisfactory quality, costed and responsible personnel assigned, the success criteria lack sharpness and do not help to drive forward the different initiatives. The headteacher has not been forceful enough in ensuring consistency in quality through setting out clear expectations for teachers in their planning and in the school's record keeping systems and in ensuring the pupils' attainment is of a higher standard. Some slackness has crept in since the last inspection when the leadership was described as strong. Currently there is not enough drive in the leadership and it is unsatisfactory.
- 44 Overall the management of the school is unsatisfactory largely because its self-evaluation systems are not rigorous enough. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Performance management and appraisal systems work satisfactorily. However, the analysis of data regarding different pupil groups and various forms of assessment do not lead to clear focused action that will ensure improvement and sustain it. The school has not developed strategies for improvement that are specific to its circumstances and based on accurate analysis, monitoring and record keeping.

- 45 The school has good financial and administrative support. Finances are satisfactorily managed and priorities are established in consultation with all staff and with the approval of the governing body, which plays a responsible role in helping the financial planning process. Sound procedures are in place to ensure the school receives good value for money when it purchases resources and the school adopts the principles of best value.
- 46 The school enjoys the support of sufficient, suitably qualified teaching staff. There is a range of skills amongst support staff who are mostly well matched to the pupils they are assigned to help. The staff is stable and committed and many teachers have been in the service of the school for many years. Parents are very supportive of the school and good progress is being made in securing their support in the home for the work that pupils do at school. Members of the Local Education Authority's advisory staff have been helpful in providing specific support for literacy and numeracy. They have worked with the school to monitor teaching and learning. However, the intervention has not yet secured a clear way forward to address the long-standing issue of low standards in the juniors and the elimination of long-standing underachievement in critical aspects of its work.
- 47 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. Individual education plans are well focused to achievement. There is a clear timetable for the preparation and review of individual education plans, which is well known by teachers. They are jointly prepared by class teachers, who have day-to-day contact with pupils, and the special educational needs co-ordinator. They specify clear and achievable targets, resources and strategies. Wherever possible parents are involved in the preparation of individual education plans and the contribution they are expected to make is specified. In a number of cases where parents do not speak English, other parents act as translators. Learning support staff are well managed and their work is targeted to priorities expressed in pupils' individual plans. There are opportunities to involve parents more fully in the review of individual education plans.
- 48 The barriers to achievement mainly centre around the accommodation, which is old and spread out, including some that is unsatisfactory. Several classrooms are too small to assist with an effective balance of practical and more formal activities. Governors feel that their role is affected by too much paper work from the DfES and which is written in too much detail.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 916,731 |
| Total expenditure          | 907,621 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,269   |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 21,366 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 30,476 |

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

- 49 The provision for children in the foundation stage is **satisfactory**, except for their physical development, which is unsatisfactory. Children aged four and five years attend the two reception classes full-time after beginning school in either September or January, dependent on the age of their birthday. At the time of the inspection, only the September intake children were in school, although induction visits by children who will be starting in January were seen. Attainment on entry is below average, particularly in speaking and listening, and in some aspects of personal and social development. Sound induction arrangements ensure that children make a positive start to school, separating from their parents and carers well and quickly settling into the routines of the reception classes. The pupils' attainment is similar at the end of the foundation stage to that reported previously, except in their physical development in which their achievements are unsatisfactory.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.**

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

- The teaching is good in this aspect of learning.
- The children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.

#### **Commentary**

- 50 Teaching in this area of learning is good. All adults know the children well and ensure that they are rapidly inducted into the positive behaviour patterns that are a good feature of the school. Teachers and support staff respond appropriately to the children's diverse needs and adopt a calm, consistent approach to them. They patiently explain the rules and expectations that they have for children's behaviour and attitudes. This ensures that children settle quickly into the learning routines. They become confident and ready to learn and have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. The children achieve well in this area of learning and the majority of the children reach the expectations for the end of the reception year.
- 51 The children play co-operatively together, put their hands up before answering teachers' questions, share toys and equipment well and know how to take turns. They listen attentively and participate in group activities well. Teachers and learning support staff help children with special educational needs very well and encourage and guide them positively and sensitively. There is satisfactory support for those learning English as an additional language. All children are appropriately included in the various activities. Children are kind and supportive towards each other and often sort out disagreements without adult intervention. Children are entrusted with jobs, such as taking registers to other classrooms, and they move around the school confidently with a sensible, mature attitude.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

**Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.**

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

- Children make good progress in learning letter names and sounds.
- In some lessons, the pace is slow and children are under-occupied.

## Commentary

- 52 Overall, the children achieve satisfactorily in their communication, language and literacy skills. The teaching in this aspect is satisfactory. Children make good progress in learning letter names and sounds as part of learning to read because of the daily practice and because of the good relationships, which help pupils to adopt a positive attitude to learning and a keenness to do well. They enthusiastically recall and recount the names of fictional characters they identify with to help them to remember the sounds of letters. Most children know the corresponding sound that each letter makes and the majority of children reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Children begin to form letters correctly and higher attaining children make and read simple sentences from word cards.
- 53 Teachers encourage an appreciation of books from the beginning. Children benefit from these opportunities and are keen and confident to share books with adults. They enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically recall events and characters from familiar tales. Children learn simple words for reading and make good progress in recognising simple words such as 'in', and 'we'. Some children are beginning to use story language when re-telling stories and use phrases such as, "She couldn't believe her eyes!" to emphasise key features.
- 54 In some lessons time is wasted and opportunities to develop reading and writing skills are missed. In one lesson seen, children keenly involved in word-recognition activities were suddenly stopped and given over fifteen minutes to change for a physical development session. No literacy based-activities were available for those who changed quickly and children were left with little to do. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are satisfactorily included in lessons and given sound, sensitive support by learning support staff, enabling them to take a full part in the activities at their own level of understanding.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

**Provision in mathematical development is good.**

**Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Teaching is good and teachers provide a good variety of activities for counting and number recognition; children, therefore, achieve well.
- Good relationships between adults and children facilitate children's learning; and they enjoy mathematics.

## Commentary

- 55 Teaching is good and children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in mathematics. By the end of the reception year, most children are set to reach the goals in mathematics for children at the end of the reception year. Teachers plan and organise mathematics lessons well and provide a good range of activities that support children's counting skills and number recognition. The two reception classes join together each week to watch recorded number programmes, which promote the children's enjoyment and encourage active participation in counting games. They know the characters in the programme and joyfully sing along to the counting songs. Teachers provide an appropriate range of practical counting activities and children count and match various objects, such as buttons, shells and beads with good levels of accuracy.
- 56 The children achieve well. Children complete a mixture of practical and written tasks. Most children form numbers correctly and recognise numerals from 0 to 10. Children enjoy practical mathematical tasks and work co-operatively in small groups and share equipment well. Good use is made of classroom routines, stories, rhymes and songs to reinforce mathematical vocabulary. For instance, 'There were ten in the bed' was sung and role-played by children using ten numbered teddy-bears and the bed from the home-corner at the end of afternoon story-time.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

**Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor areas are not well developed for learning and are under-used for work in this area.
- 57 By the end of the reception year, it is expected that most children will achieve the expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world at the end of the reception year. They achieve soundly. Teaching is satisfactory with occasionally an imaginative use of resources. Christmas cards, depicting different winter scenes were used effectively to reinforce the concept of night and day. Teachers questioned children sensitively and encouraged them to look for clues in the pictures that would help them to decide if the scene was of day or night. Children are encouraged to explain their thoughts and ideas using full sentences and correct vocabulary.
- 58 The outside areas and school grounds provide limited opportunities for children to find out about their environment and observe natural life. These areas are under-developed for learning, under-resourced and under-used. During the inspection, no activities were observed taking place outdoors.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in physical development is unsatisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement is unsatisfactory in this area of learning.
- The outside areas are too small and are ill equipped and do not adequately support the children's development in this area of learning.

### **Commentary**

- 59 Only one physical development session was seen during the inspection and the teaching in this session was unsatisfactory. The pace of the lesson was slow and the planned activities lacked challenge and stimulation. Children's physical skills are generally in line with those expected when they enter school but the children do not make enough progress in this aspect of their learning and most will not reach the goals by the end of the reception year. Their achievements are, therefore, unsatisfactory. The range of equipment available for physical development is too narrow and there are few opportunities to develop children's climbing and jumping or throwing and catching skills. The outdoor areas are small, under-developed for learning, under-resourced and under-used. They do not support development in this area of learning. Teachers do not plan activities in the outdoor areas during the winter months to support the two weekly hall lessons and this restricts the children's opportunities to ride wheeled vehicles and throw, catch, balance, climb and run on a daily basis.
- 60 Children in the reception classes are self-controlled and generally assured as they move about the classroom and school. Many show sound achievement in body control and confidence as they crawl, hop, climb and balance on large apparatus, though significant numbers still lack confidence. Teaching assistants are used well to support children who find control in a big space more difficult. Children follow teacher's instructions well, start and stop on command and offer ideas and suggestions for developing their work. Children use pencils and other equipment with increasing control and confidence.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children with special educational needs are effectively supported and included.
- Children are making good progress in artwork but do not have enough opportunities to engage in role-play and imaginative play.

### Commentary

- 61 Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. They achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory. The standard and development of children's drawing show a marked improvement over the course of the autumn term. Most children have made good progress in depicting the human form and now display a more mature understanding of the shape of the human body. Drawings of Father Christmas produced during the week of the inspection indicated that most children had achieved satisfactorily in this area of learning since starting school in September. Most children have a firm pencil grip and are very careful when colouring in.
- 62 Children enjoy singing and most join in enthusiastically with familiar songs and rhymes. There are limited opportunities for imaginative role-play. The scope for developing imagination is limited by the range of materials offered and the lack of time given to creative and imaginative play activities. As children did not have access to the outdoor areas during the week of the inspection, no creative activities were seen in the outside environment. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are sensitively supported by teaching assistants, who are particularly adept at engaging children in creative activities such as painting.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in reading but an over-use of poor quality worksheets across the curriculum limits pupils' progress in writing, particularly, but not only, in the juniors.
  - Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour very well.
  - Teaching is inconsistent in quality because monitoring has not been effective enough. As a result, planning is inconsistent and lesson intentions are often not sharply focused enough.
  - Assessment and the marking of pupils' work are unsatisfactory and insufficient use is made of the outcomes to improve pupils' attainment.
- 63 Standards in English by age seven are broadly average. They are better in reading than writing and, from a generally below average level of attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well in reading by the end of Year 2 and soundly in other aspects of English. This is similar to the judgement in the previous report. This is due to the good teaching in Years 1 and 2, especially of reading. Literacy lessons in the infants contain a good balance of pupil activity and teacher instruction, good use of time, very good use of big books, which are well chosen to illustrate particular aspects of language.
- 64 Pupils do not achieve as well in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactorily overall. By age 11, pupils' attainment is generally below average and is not as high as reported previously. The performance of boys in English has been, and still is, particularly inferior to that of the girls. Although significant numbers of Year 6 pupils are working broadly in line with national

expectations, not enough pupils reach the higher level because the pupils' attainment in writing is not as good as that in reading. Several pupils in Year 6 will not reach the expected level in English as a result. Over the past three years, standards at the end of Year 6 have been low. The overall satisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6 in English combines good progress in reading, satisfactory progress and average skills in speaking and listening but unsatisfactory progress in writing. Pupils underachieve in this aspect of English. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their handwriting, but pupils' spelling is a weaker aspect of their English work.

- 65 Lessons are taught satisfactorily. They are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 with a range from occasionally very good to occasionally unsatisfactory. Pupils do not get off to a good start in Year 3 in English. The planning is confused and does not match pupils' needs adequately enough. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in this year group. In the best English lessons seen, particularly in Year 6, where the pupils make up some lost ground, the planning is clear and realistic, teachers' expectations are high and there is a brisk pace to some of the lessons. In unsatisfactory lessons, work is not matched well enough to meet the needs of all the pupils. In general, teachers' planning throughout the school is not consistent. Where it is good, as in Year 6, it helps to meet pupils' needs effectively. Where it is unsatisfactory, the work is not well matched to the pupils' capabilities and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Generally, recording systems are not precise and the analysis of data is not used sufficiently well to influence future action to raise standards. Marking in most classes gives positive feedback to pupils with occasional, but insufficient, suggestion about how to improve their work in the future. Subsequent work does not show that pupils have benefited from the remarks. This is because not enough pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- 66 In most lessons, pupils make satisfactory gains in learning. Pupils are interested and sustain concentration, including those pupils who have English as an additional language, though the programmes for those at a very early stage of learning English are not always clearly thought through. Overall, pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily, as do pupils with special educational needs. The good relationships between teachers and pupils help to ensure that all pupils are included in all aspects of lessons. A major weakness in promoting English skills across the curriculum is the over-use of worksheets, many of which are of poor quality and do not challenge the pupils enough, limiting the pupils' progress in writing. Furthermore, pupils do not have enough opportunities for sustained writing in English, for example, to write stories at length. These factors contribute to the pupils' underachievement in writing, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- 67 The writing project set up last year for older pupils has not significantly improved writing, particularly, but not only, amongst boys. This is partly because of the overuse of the worksheets not enabling the pupils to write as effectively and as extensively as they might. There is some encouragement for pupils to write for a variety of purposes, as when Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to write poetry or to write instructions to ensure safety at the seaside and this alerts pupils that writing can be an effective means of communication.
- 68 Pupils achieve well in reading because the school promotes reading activities well. Recently parents have been provided with advice about helping their children at home and this has proved effective. There is increasing support from parents in helping to develop pupils' reading and many of them hear their children read regularly. This support is particularly effective in getting the pupils to reach the levels they do. Additionally, in class, a greater emphasis has been given to guided reading and this is encouraging good reading habits. Pupils develop good reading strategies using letter sounds, picture clues and words within words when they meet more difficult words.
- 69 Pupils enjoy sharing their work with the class when given the opportunity to do so. Year 6 pupils wrote poetry after the style of Benjamin Zephania and the class was quietly thoughtful when pupils read their own work about life as a disabled person. On this occasion pupils did well because of very good teaching and they responded in depth on a personal level. In many lessons there are good examples of paired work where pupils speak and listen to each

other as they discuss issues like shades of meaning in a poem. However, teachers mostly teach long, whole-class sessions that reduce the time pupils should use to develop independent learning skills.

- 70 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and there is both the will and the capacity throughout the school to raise standards. The need to improve writing has been recognised and a writing initiative has begun but it has yet to raise standards throughout the school. There are some unsatisfactory elements to management. Teachers' planning has not been monitored closely enough in order to achieve crystal-clear learning intentions and a good match to pupils' needs. Assessment and data analysis are not informing planning and the individual needs of pupils enough. There are satisfactory resources for the teaching of English, but the current location of the library does not promote its widespread use.

### **English across the curriculum**

- 71 Unsatisfactory. There is some occasional good use of writing across the curriculum as, for example, in science, when pupils record the results of their investigations, but the widespread over-use of worksheets, particularly in history and geography, restricts pupils' independence and their own thinking and hampers their own skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are well organised and effectively used by teachers to help pupils to learn.
- In some lessons, teachers devote insufficient time to focused teaching and purposeful discussions with pupils in groups.
- Pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm have a positive effect on their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Assessment of pupils' achievement and progress is not systematic enough.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to be independent in the way they learn and use mathematics.

### **Commentary**

- 72 National Curriculum test results in 2003 were below the national average at Year 2 and well below average for Year 6. The current groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 show better developed skills in mathematics. They are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and soundly overall in Years 3 to 6, although several pupils in each year group are not sharp enough or sufficiently accurate when undertaking calculations. Most Years 2 and 6 pupils are likely to reach national expectations in 2004 and about a quarter of Year 6 pupils look set to reach the higher level. Nevertheless, a significant number of pupils do not appear likely to reach the expected level in Year 6. It is clear that improvements in teaching, resulting from effective training and well focused support from the Local Education Authority numeracy team, are beginning to have a positive effect on the progress that the pupils are making, although this initiative has not had time to reap its full benefit. Standards are broadly average in both Years 2 and 6.
- 73 The rate of progress made by pupils varies considerably as they move through the school. Pupils are currently making good progress in Year 2. Pupils learn to order numbers to 100 in a coherent way, they count on and back and calculate by adding and subtracting. They apply their knowledge to solve money problems and work with simple fractions. They estimate and use practical activities to good effect to learn about measures. Pupils in Year 3 cover a range of mathematics but progress is slower than in other classes and pupils of average and above average are not challenged enough. In Year 6, learning activities are better focused to pupils' capabilities. Expanded methods of calculation and step-by-step approaches to solving problems helpfully develop confidence and understanding. Simple resources, such as

decimal place-value charts, support pupils' understanding effectively on numbers and the number system. Homework is well used to support learning. Throughout the school, work is regularly marked but little information is given to help pupils to improve, except in Year 6 books where helpful diagnostic comments are made.

- 74 Teaching is satisfactory overall, but with a significant proportion of good teaching, particularly in Year 6. In the good lessons, probing questions prompt pupils to think and share their ideas. Lively discussions add interest to the lessons with good use of pupils' explanations as they demonstrate their individual strategies for working out examples. Practical activities capture pupils' interest, and they enjoy the mathematics. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils bubbled over with excitement as they played a game in which scores were awarded according to the size of remainders after chosen numbers were divided by numbers generated by throwing dice. In Year 6, the use of ICT makes a good contribution to learning. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils concentrated intently as some members of the class used an interactive whiteboard to plot points in all four quadrants. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in lessons, and teachers take care to ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs to help them to do as well as they can. Teachers' high expectations for behaviour are met and pupils have a very positive attitude to learning.
- 75 Most lessons start and end well. They begin with a brisk mental and oral starter to practise counting and improve rapid recall of number facts, and they come to a well-rounded end with a review of the main teaching points. Learning is satisfactory. Most pupils engage well with the whole class discussions, display a good deal of effort and try hard. They make satisfactory progress in lessons. However, in too many lessons they lose focus during the main teaching activity. Pupils who are not challenged, and those who find tasks too difficult to manage without help, become disinterested. This happens because assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not sufficiently systematic and teaching activities are not planned precisely enough to meet pupils' learning needs. In lessons, teachers spend too long monitoring and supervising group work and devote insufficient time to focused teaching and purposeful discussions with pupils.
- 76 The curriculum is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy teaching programmes are used as a basis for planning and these ensure that all aspects of mathematics are covered, though there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and apply mathematics creatively to solve problems. There is suitable emphasis on numeracy. Some important elements of mathematical learning, such as the development and use of informal methods of calculation, are not afforded enough attention, and this restricts the development of pupils' own ideas and excitement of the subject. A high proportion of work is teacher-directed. Consequently, many pupils experience difficulties when they have to work independently.
- 77 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards are not rigorous enough, and work remains to be done to improve procedures for setting individual pupil targets and tracking pupils' progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

- 78 Pupils use mathematics in some other subjects, such as measuring in design and technology, using time-lines in history, exploring shapes in art work and recording information on graphs and in tables for a variety of purposes. However, the use and development of mathematics in other subjects are not yet systematically planned to re-inforce pupils' learning and to extend the application of mathematics in meaningful situations and is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Overuse of worksheets in all year groups hinders pupils' own thinking and investigative skills and presentation of work is unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring standards in teaching and learning is not yet fully developed.
- More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment is not used effectively to set targets for improvement and there are weaknesses in consistency of marking.

### Commentary

- 79 Standards are in line with expectations throughout the school and pupils achieve soundly. As at the time of the last inspection, the majority of pupils are on target to reach the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6 and a good proportion of pupils look set to reach higher levels of attainment at the end of the current academic year. This is significantly higher than the previous three years when standards, especially at the higher level, have been well below the national average. The current groups of pupils at age seven and 11 are more capable and this accounts for the improved picture. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are effectively included in all lessons, though those at a very early stage of learning English require more support to understand. Pupils display an understanding of the learning relevant to their age and teachers plan work that covers the appropriate topics for each year group. For example, Year 2 pupils know that forces are pushes and pulls and Year 6 pupils know about the relationships between the earth, moon and sun. However, pupils' written work is not always well presented and there is no consistent format for the presentation of pupils' scientific work. Teachers' over-use of worksheets results in tasks being presented in ways that are not challenging and affect the opportunities for the pupils' own thinking and the quality of investigative work in science throughout the school.
- 80 Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons usually have clear objectives, but these are not always shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and this leads to confusion for some pupils. Teachers have high, consistent expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour but they do not always make their expectations clear about the quantity and quality they expect of pupils' work. Learning is satisfactory. Pupils try hard, join in discussions and show interest. They listen attentively in lessons but they often sit for extended periods of time whilst teachers talk about the focus and purpose of the lesson. This enables them to make satisfactory gains in knowledge but restricts the time pupils have to participate actively in investigations or to write up the main points of the lesson. Some lessons are too dependent on teacher talk, rather than active pupil participation. Teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school with some marking, particularly in Year 6, helpfully identifying what pupils need to do in order to improve, but with much other work in the school being simply marked with a tick or smiley face and errors sometimes being overlooked.
- 81 Leadership is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory because the monitoring of standards of teaching and pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently well developed across the school. The co-ordinator has introduced some national guidance for science, which supports teachers with suggested activities for teaching and learning. The school is beginning to adapt this to meet their own particular needs and requirements. Standards in science are similar to those reported previously.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in ICT.
- Resources are good and are used effectively to enable pupils to learn.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils' enjoyment of the subject helps them to learn well.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The location of the library in the computer suite is a distraction to pupils using the ICT suite.

### Commentary

- 82 Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average and have improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. This is because teachers are well trained and more confident to teach ICT and they use a much improved range of resources to help pupils to learn, including computers, interactive white boards, data projectors and digital cameras. Pupils find things out from a range of sources, including the Internet, and they create images, text, graphs, tables and plans. They learn to enter and store information and review their work. There are good opportunities to try things out and discuss ideas with other pupils and adults. Good links are made with other subjects. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school and there is no evidence that any group does better or worse than another. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to keep up with their peers.
- 83 Teaching is good. It ranges from satisfactory to good across the school, and all lessons seen included some good features. In all lessons, pupils are reminded of previous teaching and learning, they reflect on their progress and are clear about what they are expected to do and to achieve. Teachers' well focused questions help pupils to make comparisons and select appropriate strategies and resources. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils explained their reasons for using one software program rather than another to make plans of the classroom and demonstrated good knowledge of the programs in doing so.
- 84 Teachers draw effectively on their own expertise and assessment of pupils' achievements to decide how they can best help pupils to learn. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher skilfully incorporated a computer demonstration by a pupil, showing how to create a picture in the style of Mondrian. This gave other pupils the confidence to do it for themselves. Learning in ICT is good. Pupils work effectively in lessons and show keen interest in using the computers. They work well in pairs and co-operate effectively in discussing their efforts and in learning new skills, which many do quickly. Pupils have very good attitudes and they are eager to learn. Pupils enjoy their ICT lessons and make good progress in them. However, the location of the library in the ICT suite has disadvantages. In a Year 3 lesson, a number of pupils found it difficult to regain concentration and continue with their work after being interrupted and asked to change their library books.
- 85 Information and communication technology is well led and managed. A good quality action plan is well focused to raising standards. Recently introduced records of pupils' skills provide a useful means of monitoring the curriculum and tracking pupils' progress but it is too soon to judge their impact. The monitoring of medium-term planning helps teachers to assess the standards of pupils' work, though the observation of lessons to improve teaching is not frequent enough.

### Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum

- 86 The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Occasionally there are some good links with other subjects, such as in art and design, but there is scope for seizing more opportunities in general classroom work, for example, to tabulate results in science. Some

good links are made in ICT lessons with other subjects, as when Year 5 pupils made a plan of their classroom and learned how to rotate shapes of their desks into the desired positions.

## HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in geography but inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. Two lessons were seen in history and additional evidence obtained from work scrutiny. Religious education was not inspected.

- 87 No **geography** lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from work samples indicates that National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered adequately, though challenge is sometimes lacking. In the infants, pupils develop the concept of a key as they design their own island map but much of the work in Years 1 and 2 is shallow. Too much is done for the pupils and they merely draw pictures alongside the teacher's words or colour in pictures. The expectations and level of challenge are not high enough in the infants. Year 6 pupils show a good level of concern about the environment as they debate the positive and negative points of a simulated proposed by-pass and show a sound understanding of the environmental damage that may be caused. They plan accurately a route to Upnor Castle in nearby Rochester using large scale Ordnance Survey maps. They understand weather symbols.

### History

Provision in **history** is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and artefacts are well used to stimulate pupils' interest in history.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves about the past.

#### Commentary

- 88 In **history**, standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6, and are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding about people and events in the past. The best work is produced when pupils' imagination is captured by interesting learning activities, such as the Year 5 visit to Horton Kirby, when they dress up as Victorians and engage in role-play to experience a taste of life as it was at the time. Pupils achieve soundly in the subject.
- 89 Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers successfully use pupils' own understanding and experience to help them to acquire a sense of age and time, as in a Year 1 lesson when a teddy was described as being "as old as your mummy". In good teaching, probing questions prompt pupils to speculate and explain their thinking. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils demonstrated good understanding of Victorian values in their answers to questions about a swimming costume, modelled in the lesson. In less effective teaching, too much time is spent in giving information and work is not always well matched to pupils' interests and ability. As a result, higher attaining pupils only achieve the levels of which they are capable when tasks give them more scope for investigation and are of interest to them. Pupils' learning is satisfactory. They make sound gains in learning during lessons. They enjoy the subject, behave well and listen attentively but there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and use their own ideas to find out about the past.
- 90 The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for pupils to draw on their own life experiences and refer to historical sources to make comparisons between past and present. In Year 1 pupils use their senses to compare old and new toys and in Year 5 they collect information from a theme visit, stories and non-fiction texts to compare their own lives with those of Victorian children. Time-lines and sequence diagrams help pupils to place events and objects in chronological order and they begin to refer to dates, including AD and BC as they develop a sense of time. Much emphasis is placed on developing pupils' factual

knowledge of history and there is an increasing use of the Internet to obtain information. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative, which was reported at the time of the last inspection, and this still remains a weaknesses. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory because of the lack of in-depth monitoring, which results in some similar failings to those at the time of the last inspection.

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

### **Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**

Two lessons were observed in each of art and design, and physical education, three in music and one in design and technology.

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

- Provision for design and technology has improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' ability in singing is above average.
- Accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory.

- 91 Design and technology was not a major inspection focus but it is evident that the school has made good improvements in its arrangements for teaching **design and technology** since the previous inspection and standards are now in line with expectations. A good range of resources is being purchased each year, particularly construction equipment. The leadership of design and technology is good and this is resulting in the promotion of ideas that will enthuse pupils and this results in pupils who show good levels of interest in their work. For example, work has begun with a group of Year 6 pupils on a Greenpower Project, the building of a Goblin Kit Car that will be completed and raced next April.
- 92 The teaching and pupils' learning in the one lesson observed were satisfactory. Satisfactory attention was given to the design process. The teacher used good questions to keep pupils thinking and pupils responded well in paired discussion and offered ideas. Pupils record the stages of their project with commentary, drawings and review. The research work of an expert in the subject has been used as the basis for in-service training for teachers and this has improved further teachers' growing confidence and knowledge in teaching the subject.
- 93 Numerous projects in recent years have been recorded in files kept by the subject leader and these show that younger make clown puppets with moving limbs and design and make clothes for a card teddy. Year 3 pupils use the invisible triangle concept to make a stable picture frame that stands freely, whilst Year 5 pupils learn about cams to make a card with a moving part and then move on to make a moving toy with a moving part. Discussions with pupils showed that they understand the design process and the need to evaluate their work with a view to making improvements.
- 94 **Physical education** was not a major inspection focus and not enough observations were made to judge standards or the quality of teaching. However, the little observation that was made indicated that not enough challenge is given to the pupils. A recorded radio programme gave a class of infant pupils too much direction in their dance and they did not draw enough on their own thinking. In a different dance lesson, which mainly focused on the development of co-ordination for pupils with special educational needs, but in which the whole class was involved, the pupils were again very much directed in their movements. The major focus of a Year 6 games lesson was table-tennis and, whilst the pupils had good opportunities to develop correct techniques, they were not physically challenged in the activity. Year 4 pupils were being better provided for in this respect in an outside games lesson on the yard when they were being taught the correct way to pass a rugby ball. Reliable evidence has been given that suggests the school makes good use of specialist coaches at various times of the year. There is a lack of large physical education apparatus and accommodation for games and physical education is unsatisfactory.

- 95 Similar to the time of the last inspection, standards in **art and design** are average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. A scrutiny of work and discussions with staff show that, over time, the standard of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and pupils' behaviour is well managed to secure a good working environment. In one of the two art and design lessons observed, Year 1 pupils combined art with design and technology to make moving parts for a calendar. They evaluated their work satisfactorily. The teacher helped them with their ideas so that they felt good about what they produced. Pupils use of a variety of materials and colour and learn the skills of cutting, folding, gluing and printing. Year 6 pupils were challenged in one lesson to make a hat. They set about the activity independently, found that some extravagant ideas did not translate well into practice and reviewed their efforts to find better solutions. The teacher was watchful but not intrusive and, whilst pupils felt confident in seeking advice, they happily explored their own creativity. Learning is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, pupils worked co-operatively where appropriate and were quick to appreciate the skills and efforts of other pupils. They make sound progress in lessons and enjoy the activities.
- 96 Resources for the teaching of art and design are adequate and the leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory enabling pupils to make sound progress in learning skills progressively as they move up through the school.
- 97 **Music** is a strength in the curriculum and pupils achieve well. In particular, pupils' ability in singing is above average and this, together with the increased opportunities for musical composition, represents an improvement since the last inspection. Three lessons were observed one in the infants, which was satisfactory, and two in the juniors, one good and one satisfactory. Additional observations in assemblies and rehearsals for Christmas concerts demonstrated pupils' above average singing skills and the overall good quality of teaching in music. Pupils' learning is good. They make good progress, particularly in singing, and they show much enjoyment. They sing tunefully and with good voice. Older pupils sing in two parts and manage this very successfully. Pupils sing with much sensitivity and change the volume of sound to match the words of the song. Other evidence provided indicates that the pupils cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in an interesting way. In the good Year 6 lesson, pupils did well in selecting a rhythm to accompany the rap poems they had written and there was lots of laughter and fun in this enjoyable lesson. Pupils engage in choral speaking, compositional work and public performances and some pupils are confident to sing solo in the school masses. Music is linked effectively to other subjects, as when they compose music to symbolise Greek scenery, linked to their historical studies of the ancient Greeks.
- 98 Both the leadership and management of the subject are good because of very competent musicianship and very good subject knowledge. The subject leader combines with some other teachers who have good skills in playing different instruments to accompany the pupils' singing with flute, recorder and guitar. It is this good use, the subject leader's skill in teaching singing and the ready enthusiasm of the pupils, which help to create the harmonious and tuneful sound, which inspires the listener.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The structure to the curriculum provision for personal, social and health education is still developing, but teachers are keen to move the curriculum provision further forward.
- This aspect of work lacks a leader to guide its further development.

## Commentary

- 99 This is a developing aspect of the school's work but it is strongly supported by the work in religious education. Currently not all classes undertake formal lessons in aspects other than religious education, but some good practice was observed. Infant pupils gathered in a circle and pupils mimed activities that had emotion at the heart. They reflected on sad and happy times, taking turns to express their thoughts in a well ordered procedure. In another lesson, pupils were encouraged to make positive statements about others. In a lesson in the juniors, pupils debated the theme 'What is a greedy person?' Whilst the pupils made some good suggestions, the content was over-directed by the teacher, the lesson lacked momentum and the pupils became bored. The discussions in these lessons made a good contribution to the provision for pupils' social and moral development. Work in science across the school develops pupils' knowledge of healthy eating and a balanced diet. The governing body has decided that sex education should not be provided for the pupils in school.
- 100 The teaching observed ranged from good to unsatisfactory and overall was satisfactory. Training for 'circle time' when pupils gather in a circle to comment on issues or to undertake cooperative activities, has been provided for staff but there is a wide range in the quality of lessons. In some personal, social and health education lessons, there is a clear rationale for the lesson, such as considering the feelings of others. At other times, the purpose of the activity is unclear and pupils lose interest. No-one has overall responsibility for what takes place in this aspect of learning and this is a weakness. Within lessons, the pupils' learning is satisfactory in personal, social and health education. They show respect for the contributions of others and behave well as they take part in the activities. Pupils achieve soundly in this aspect of work.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>5</b> |
| How inclusive the school is  | 4        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 5        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 5        |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 4        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Attendance  | 4        |
| Attitudes   | 2        |
| 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  | 5        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 4        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 5        |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                         | 4        |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                          | 5        |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views              | 4        |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents             | 3        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 3        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 4        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>5</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 4        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  | 5        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 4        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 5        |

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