

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST STEPHEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Welling

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101455

Headteacher: Mary Masterson

Lead inspector: Dr John Hill

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 257956

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:	398
School address:	Ruskin Avenue Welling Kent
Postcode:	DA16 3AQ
Telephone number:	(020) 8303 9738
Fax number:	(020) 8303 0052
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A J J Woodcock
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> September 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Stephen's is a larger than average Catholic Primary School. Most pupils live within the parish and their background is mainly favourable. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average and attainment on entry is above average. There is only a small percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and most pupils speak English as their first language. Ten per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is below the national average. Eight of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is well below average. In 2001 and 2002, the school was given a School Achievement Award. During the past year, the school has also successfully run a family learning programme for parents.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21165	Dr John Hill	Lead inspector	Science, English as an additional language
9563	Jeanette Reid	Lay inspector	
24260	Derek Allenby	Team inspector	Mathematics, special educational needs
27629	Peter Brooks	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, physical education, history, geography
23354	Evelyn Adams	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, music, design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** The school has improved significantly since the last inspection and standards in the school are very high. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, combined with a supportive and very well informed governing body and school staff, have helped create an atmosphere in which pupils succeed and are valued as individuals. Teaching is of a consistently high standard and the curriculum caters very effectively for pupils of all abilities. Within this inclusive school, parents are seen as positive partners in promoting the education of their children. The outcome is a happy and high achieving school where teachers and support staff are very effective in raising standards. Overall, the school gives very good value for money.

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

- The headteacher and the governing body provide very effective leadership.
- Pupils achieve very well. This is the result of good, and often very good, teaching.
- This is a very inclusive school in which all pupils are very well cared for and supported.
- The school has excellent links with parents and the community.
- Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide for the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils are very happy at school and get on very well with each other.
- The school does not effectively plan for the teaching of literacy, numeracy, and personal, social and health education within other subject areas.
- There is a need to improve the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- The school should consult more with pupils and parents, and act upon their views accordingly.

Overall the school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1998. The key areas for improvements, in standards in mathematics and with higher attaining pupils, have been successfully addressed. While improvements in pupils' skills and knowledge in information and communication technology have taken place, improvement in this area is only satisfactory. Significant improvement in teaching in Key Stage 1 has taken place and systems for assessing pupils' progress are now of a very high standard.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

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

**Pupils achieve very well overall. This is a consequence of good, and often very good, teaching, alongside very good support from learning support assistants.** Overall, the skills, knowledge and understanding of the children entering the Reception class are above average. Children within the Foundation Stage settle well into school and nearly all attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Many of them exceed these expectations. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and good in most other subjects. Standards in Year 6 are very good in English and mathematics, and good in science

and most other subjects. Overall, standards have risen in Year 2 and remained high in Year 6 national tests since the last inspection. Both higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language attain well. The attainment of boys has been particularly marked in 2003 national tests, where they attained in line with girls. The one area where improvements could be made is in information and communication technology. Here, the lack of planning to improve provision in this area in the foundation subjects limits the opportunities of pupils to make progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their interest in school life, their behaviour and their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding, are very good. The pupils behave very well at all times. They have very good relationships and are respectful of all adults within the school. Older pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities and there is a notable lack of harassment or bullying. Any incidents are followed up carefully. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, and often very good, throughout the school.** Pupils learn effectively and make very good progress as a result of the successful teaching methods and the very positive support given to pupils by teachers and learning support assistants. Staff know the pupils very well and plan very effectively to meet their needs. Children in the Foundation Stage are well provided for. Both teaching and learning in English and mathematics are very good. Throughout the school, the curriculum is firmly based on the National Curriculum and national guidance. A vast range of local community and outside school links and visits enhances the work in school very effectively. Parents give significant support to these activities. However, the planning for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education across the curriculum is not fully developed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are very good.** There is a shared commitment by staff and governors to provide the very best education and to raise standards for all pupils. The headteacher leads a strong and united staff very successfully. She has put in place very good procedures for checking on the success of the school. The governors are very committed and hardworking. They use their expertise very well to offer both support and challenge and to meet all their statutory responsibilities.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They support the welcoming and inclusive nature of the school and feel that their children are very well supported. Parents have no major concerns about the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, whose opinions were sought, feel that the school is very good and were particularly positive in their comments about the staff. Formal procedures for the systematic monitoring of the views of pupils and parents are, however, not yet in place.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve cross-curricular planning for literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education.
- Improve the provision of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Agree simple procedures for monitoring and responding to the views of parents and pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils achieve very well overall. In the Foundation Stage, achievement is good in all areas of learning. Standards in Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics are very good and they are good in science. The achievement of boys has been particularly good and they succeed as well as girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well as a result of good teaching.
- Standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average.
- Boys achieve very well, and in line with girls by Years 2 and 6.
- Higher attaining pupils produce work of a high standard in all curriculum areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of very effective planning for their needs and very good support from learning support assistants.
- Although attainment in information and communication technology is satisfactory, better planned links across the curriculum would help to improve standards.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. When children start school in the Reception class, assessment information shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are mostly above average. As a result of good teaching, the children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and by the age of five, nearly all children have reached the goals expected, with many having exceeded them.

##### *School's results in national tests*

2. Overall standards in Year 2 have risen considerably since the last inspection. In Year 6, the improvement has been in line with the national trend.
3. The table below shows that in 2003 national tests, standards in Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been a significant improvement in national test results in Key Stage 1. This is particularly the case in mathematics, which was highlighted as a key area for improvement during the last inspection. The improvement in standards is a result of the clear focus of the school in raising the quality of teaching in these areas.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.7 (15.0)	14.6 (14.5)
mathematics	17.5 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were pupils 60 in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The table below shows that in 2003 standards in Year 6 national tests were well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Evidence from these results also indicates the continuing improvement of boys, who now attain at a similar high level as girls. The school has made considerable efforts to raise standards amongst boys through their weekly planning, and this has had very positive results.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (29.8)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	29.4 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.1 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

*Inspection findings*

*The Foundation Stage*

5. At the time of the inspection, most pupils in the Reception class have been at school for just over two months. They have all settled and are achieving well. Assessment evidence indicates that nearly all pupils will reach the goals expected from them by the end of the Reception Year in all the areas of learning. Many will exceed them. The lack of an enclosed, planned outdoor play area for the children limits opportunities to further develop children's physical development. However, this is recognised by the school and plans are in place to remedy this issue.

*Years 1 and 2*

6. Pupils achieve very well as a result of good teaching and well-planned provision to support their development. The standards attained by pupils are very high in all areas of English and mathematics. This is a result of the significant efforts made by the school in raising standards in these key areas. Standards are above average in science and vary between very good and average in lessons seen in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils respond very well to the high expectations demanded from them. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by learning support assistants in the classroom and achieve much success.

*Years 3 to 6*

7. Pupils achieve very well in all Year groups. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and reflect the focus of the school to maintain the high standards set in Key Stage 1. Standards are above average in science. Standards in the lessons seen in other subjects vary between very good and average. Pupils of all abilities are successfully challenged and are very well supported to meet their individual needs.

*Whole school matters*

8. There is a very strong inclusive ethos within the school and a commitment to mixed ability teaching. This inclusive approach is shared by all the staff and every effort is made to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their abilities, do their best and succeed well. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make very good gains in their learning as a result of high quality teaching and clearly focused targets in Individual Education Plans. The small number of pupils who have English as an additional language also achieve well. The very high achievement of pupils with additional needs is partly as a result of the very effective individual support from learning support assistants. It is also due to the very positive work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs in withdrawing pupils in small groups for intensive literacy and numeracy lessons. The school has good evidence, through its assessment procedures, to highlight the very good progress of these pupils. The emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy has had a very positive effect on standards. However, more effective planning for the teaching of literacy and numeracy across other subject areas would help to raise standards even further. The one area of the school where standards could improve, however, is in information and communication technology. While pupils achieve at a

satisfactory level when it is taught as a separate subject, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to succeed well in this area in many of the foundation subjects.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development is also very good with social, moral, spiritual and cultural development being very strong features. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The caring ethos of the school permeates all lessons and activities, and helps to promote pupils' very good relationships, attitudes and personal development.
- The very good role models of the staff ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong and behave well.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are very good.

### **Commentary**

#### *Attitudes and behaviour*

9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are very well developed. The overwhelming majority of pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They respond well to the caring ethos of the school. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with good social skills and these are built upon to ensure that they rapidly settle into school routines and quickly learn to work co-operatively and independently. They also enjoy the good range of activities planned for them and are eager to learn. Pupils in the rest of the school take a pride in their school and in their work. They enjoy coming to school. Discussions with pupils indicate that they consider their school to be a safe and friendly place. They also appreciate the wide range of experiences and opportunities the school offers them. They are interested and involved in the wide range of activities that the school provides, both in lessons and out of school hours. Parents are very supportive of the school and very happy with the values the school promotes. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils listen very well in all lessons, move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and always remember to put their hand up before answering teachers' questions. All members of staff have high expectations of pupil behaviour and there is a clear and consistent approach to behaviour management. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and discussions with pupils would indicate that bullying rarely occurs and, when it does, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. No pupils have been excluded from the school and there have been no racist incidents.
10. When given opportunities to work independently or in groups, pupils work co-operatively, sharing resources, valuing each other's ideas and concentrating well on tasks. Pupils generally work very quietly on tasks and follow teachers' instructions and requests readily.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have the same attitudes and values as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported by learning support assistants and are welcomed, supported and included by pupils who all display a caring and understanding attitude that reflects the ethos of the school.

#### *Relationships*

12. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good and have a positive impact on learning. They are supportive of each other and their teachers. Pupils are happy and secure. They enjoy coming to school and appreciate an atmosphere in which they feel valued. Pupils respond very well to the help provided and hold their teachers and learning support assistants in very high esteem. They enjoy receiving rewards and strive for "Star of the Week" stickers

for achievement and effort. Pupils of all ages mix well at playtime and lunchtime. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in all school activities, including outings and playtimes.

### *Personal development*

13. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted from the time they enter school. They benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in the school. The adults in the Foundation Stage, for example, provide particularly good role models by communicating and interacting with the children and each other in a calm, relaxed, clear, consistent and good natured way which, in turn, is modelled by pupils. When pupils show qualities such as honesty, politeness and helpfulness, these are acknowledged and praised by teachers. All pupils are aware of school rules and expectations, and this helps the school to be a very orderly community. The values are promoted in lessons and through the general ethos of the school. A number of positive ‘citizenship’ activities were observed during the inspection. There is, however, no School Council so the school does not have a system for seeking and acting upon the view of pupils. In discussions with pupils, they expressed a few minor concerns about school organisation and said that they would appreciate a system for feeding these concerns back to the school management. When children start at the school, older pupils act successfully as “buddies” at playtimes and lunchtimes to help the younger children cope with new routines. In all classes, pupils are keen to act as monitors and help with the smooth running of the class. Residential visits for pupils in Year 6 provide a good opportunity for pupils to develop maturity and responsibility. Pupils are encouraged, through all school activities, to be honest, trustworthy and well mannered. Although pupils’ spiritual development will be inspected by the local diocese, the inspection team viewed this aspect of school life to be very good.

### *Cultural development*

14. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a good understanding of western culture through subjects such as history, art, music and English. Pupils’ understanding of different cultures is very well promoted through the vast range of visits to places and events in London and the community as well as charitable fundraising activities and through aspects of the curriculum. Well presented displays around the school highlight a range of cultural traditions.

### *Attendance*

15. The attendance and punctuality of pupils are very good. Attendance is very good throughout the school, and well above the national average. Parents ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually for the start of the school day. Registration is well run and efficient, although the school does not check registers on a regular enough basis to see if all teachers are following the school procedures correctly. When a pupil is absent, however, the school telephones home the first day to check the reason. Nearly all parents say that their child is keen to come to school.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting Year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.7	School data	0.0
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.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Pupils learn well and systems for assessing the progress of pupils are very good. This is an improvement on the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 1, where the quality of teaching was a key issue. The head and deputy headteacher have placed a great emphasis on raising the quality of teaching in the core subjects and particularly in Key Stage 1, and this effort has had a significant effect. There is a strong focus on the needs of individual pupils and this is very well supported by a very extensive range of community links.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching throughout the school is at least good and often it is very good. Teaching is especially good in English and mathematics in both key stages. Pupils throughout the school also achieve very well because of the very good planning and the high expectations that the staff have for them, regardless of their ability level. Teachers also have strong links with parents and keep them well informed of their children's progress. However, the school does not formally consult with parents and pupils on a regular basis. Teaching, however, is very well supported by a large range of community-based activities which enhance the curriculum within school. This inclusive approach is enhanced by the very effective systems for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting also voiced their strong approval of teaching throughout the school. The one area where teaching could be improved is within information and communication technology, where most subject co-ordinators do not plan for the effective use of this within their curriculum areas.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. This sets a firm foundation for learning.
- Very good support from learning support assistants helps pupils to move forward.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively provided for.
- Assessment, especially in English and mathematics, is fully used to inform what to teach the pupils next.
- Teachers' planning is clear and effective.
- Teachers do not yet plan effectively for the use of information and communication technology within their lessons.

## Commentary

16. The table below indicates the quality of teaching across the school. There is no significant difference between the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (5%)	16 (30%)	23 (43%)	12 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

## Foundation Stage

17. Teachers in the Foundation Stage plan effectively to provide activities that are relevant, enjoyable and include all aspects of the Early Years curriculum. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-selected activities, which meets the needs of children well. The particular emphasis which the early Years staff place on the development of language

skills is very positive and provides longer term benefits for the success of children as they move through the key stages.

#### *Years 1 and 2*

18. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are some common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. These include an inclusive approach that recognises the potential of all pupils and seeks to get the very best from them. These high expectations are reinforced by the very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the shared trust between them. This enables pupils to be confident, to do their best at all times and to be fully involved in their learning. Very good support from learning support assistants means that all pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, have the opportunity within the classroom to seek clear and well-directed adult help.

#### *Years 3 to 6*

19. In Key Stages 3 to 6, teachers effectively build on the good teaching of previous years. In the very best lessons, interesting activities and a lively approach gripped pupils' interest and helped them to move forward quickly. Very good questioning enables pupils to think carefully and develop their understanding. Teachers make every effort to involve pupils in developing skills for learning and encourage them to think for themselves. Examples of such teaching are evident across the school, especially in the core subjects, as well as in music.

#### *Whole school matters*

20. All the classes are very well organised, with equipment and books easily accessible. Teachers meet regularly together and plan as a team, both in terms of individual subject and key stage requirements. The very good planning allows teachers to be consistent in the way they approach different subjects and confident in their own abilities. The result of such an approach is that pupils of all ages and abilities learn well. There is, however, a limited use of information and communication technology to support learning in most of the foundation subjects. Curriculum co-ordinators are aware that this is an issue and the headteacher has made this a priority in the school development plan.

#### *Assessing pupils' progress*

21. There are very good procedures in place to assess the progress of pupils. In English and mathematics they are particularly strong. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection where systems for assessment were judged to be unsatisfactory. Non-statutory tests and teacher assessments are very well used to track pupils and to set individual targets for improvement. These are effectively shared with parents through the home-school book. Homework is appropriately set and parents at the pre-inspection meeting indicated that teachers were consistent in its use. Teachers' marking is of a high standard. The good quality comments in pupils' books are both encouraging and highlight how to improve. As a result of these procedures, teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' current level of achievement and are able to plan effectively for improvement. The one area where systems for assessment are not yet well developed is within information and communication technology. The headteacher has placed this as a priority in the school development plan.

#### **The curriculum**

Overall, the school provides a good range of curricular opportunities to arouse and maintain pupils' interest in learning and to ensure that they progress well. These enable pupils to attain high standards and achieve well. Although the curriculum has not been reviewed to ensure that links are made across all subject areas, pupils follow a broad range of subjects. These are enriched very well by many carefully considered learning opportunities provided outside of the school, and by bringing in expertise, where appropriate, to enhance pupils' learning. There are sufficient teachers and support

assistants to deliver the curriculum, and the accommodation and resources available very effectively meet the needs of the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed its curriculum very well in English and mathematics, adapting the National Strategies to improve standards.
- The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment, particularly in sport and the arts.
- The school makes very good inclusive provision for higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The accommodation is of a very high standard. The very good range of resources and facilities supports pupils' learning.
- The school does not consistently plan for the teaching of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

22. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school has worked very hard to implement and adapt innovative practice in literacy and numeracy. This has included reviews of practice, training for staff, enhancing parents' involvement in their children's learning, and detailed analyses of the effect of teaching on pupils' learning. These areas are very effectively led by the co-ordinators working with the headteacher. As a result, pupils achieve highly and attain very high standards in these subjects at the end of both key stages, which, especially in Key Stage 1, is an improvement since the last inspection.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are taught well in mixed ability classes, where they are fully accepted by their peers, who respect differences in learning and social development. They are provided full access to the curriculum. Experienced learning support assistants, allocated to every class, are very well trained and are very effective in supporting pupils' individual needs. The new co-ordinator for special educational needs also provides very good support to small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from their lessons on a regular basis to improve their literacy skills. Pupils' work in these groups is regularly assessed, reviewed and recorded, and shows that pupils are making very good achievements. Extension activities are also very well developed to support the attainment of higher attaining pupils.
24. The other subjects of the curriculum are well organised around the National Curriculum schemes of work and includes examples of very good planning in science, art, physical education and music. While the emphasis on the core subjects of English and mathematics has been beneficial in raising standards, the inspection team agrees with the headteacher that an increase in the time allocation for the foundation subjects would help broaden curriculum opportunities even further. Although the teaching of literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education across the curriculum was evident in observations of lessons, it is not always systematically planned for. The school has also not yet analysed the ways in which information and communication technology can contribute to subjects other than the core ones. An improvement in planned opportunities for pupils in these areas would help to further raise standards in the school.
25. The school is rightly proud of its commitment to provide a very good range of educational visits and welcomes a large number of visitors to the school. These visits promote interest and enjoyment in learning and make significant contributions to the success of the curriculum. Sporting links are particularly extensive, involving professional coaching in football and cricket. Pupils also experience competitive sport with other schools. Musical links are equally well developed, ensuring that children hear high quality performances, including an annual visit to the London Philharmonic, as well as enhancing their own performing skills through regular practice. Pupils in both Years 3 and Year 6 benefit from an annual residential trip to Ripple Down House in Kent.

26. There are a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Very good specialist support is provided through the appointment of a teacher for special needs and a music specialist. There has been a large planned investment in the recruitment and training of a very good range of support staff that make a very positive contribution to the work of the school. The school is housed in a modern building and the accommodation it provides is very good. It has full access and facilities for pupils with disabilities. There is a large and well-used dual-purpose hall, a multi-purpose hall and a new computer suite. There is a small grassed area, which is small but well maintained. The outside play areas have been very well designed to meet the needs of all children, providing a safe, secure environment. Plans are in hand to provide further outdoor facilities to meet the needs of the Foundation Stage pupils and to develop a wildlife area. The range and quality of resources for the majority of subjects are very good and have a positive impact on both teaching and learning. In addition to the new and well-resourced computer suite, there are additional computers in each classroom, which are in the process of being linked to the school network. The school is gradually building up resources in this area of the curriculum but has not yet fully audited its needs for all subject areas. All teachers are provided with laptop computers to aid planning and to support their teaching.

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

The school is very effective in ensuring for the care and welfare of pupils, and their health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety, and child protection procedures are very secure.
- Very good induction procedures help pupils to settle in well.
- Well-planned link programmes prepare pupils well for secondary education.
- Pupils receive well-targeted advice for English, mathematics and their personal development.
- Pupils are not consulted regularly about their views.
- There are no formalised procedures to support the mid-day supervisors in the playground.

### **Commentary**

27. The school continues to be very successful in promoting the welfare of pupils, and ensuring their health and safety. The governing body and premises manager carry out their duties diligently. They tour the site regularly and attend to any concerns that are identified. Fire drills are appropriately carried out, and school trips are very well planned in connection with safety issues. Child protection procedures are securely in place. All staff have received up to date training in this area. The school promotes healthy and safe living each Year through the health education programme.
28. Induction procedures are very good for new pupils. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that the school does all it can to help pupils settle, although a small number who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were less happy. The inspectors found, however, that the induction programme is well planned, that parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's settling in and that the information provided to new parents is very good. They also found that staff are readily available to talk to parents and that a teacher is on duty at the Reception gate each day when they arrive.
29. There is a well-planned programme to prepare Year 5 and 6 pupils for secondary education. Pupils are prepared for the outside world by structured talks given by the police liaison officer, and participation in the Junior Citizenship Scheme. This includes discussions on personal organisation, travelling and bullying. The residential trip to Ripple Down in Kent helps Year 6

pupils to become more mature and responsible. Study guides are also given to parents so that they can help their child cope with the extra homework in secondary schools. All of these are in addition to the normal arrangements for transition.

30. The school uses assessment information very well to provide specific targets in English and mathematics and for each pupil. These are discussed with pupils and written in their books so that parents know them. Teachers give effective feedback to pupils on their progress in meeting these targets when they mark the pupils' work. Staff know the pupils very well and have very good relationships with them. They are well equipped to offer support when it is needed. Teaching assistants play an important part in the life of the school. They liaise well with teachers, use the interactive whiteboards very effectively to support the pupils' learning, and contribute to the calm, caring ethos in the school. However, although there are procedures to support mid-day supervisors in the playground, these are not yet formalised. There has also been a lack of training behaviour management.
31. Pupils are not consulted regularly about their views to encourage their involvement in the school's work. There is no school council, there have been no pupil surveys, and there are no pupil mentors. However, pupils' views have been sought on the development of the playground, and teachers do listen to pupils' individual opinions in lessons and welcome their comments and ideas.

### **How well does the school work with parents and the community?**

Links with parents and with the community are both very good. Links with other schools and colleges are good. The six-week extended school community services course, provided to parents to support their understanding of the literacy and numeracy initiatives, was good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents think very highly of the school and are fully involved in its life.
- The school provides very good information to parents about what their child is taught and how well he or she is progressing.
- Parents' contribution to their child's learning is excellent.
- Very strong links with the community enliven pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Commentary**

32. Parents responding to the questionnaire, those attending the meeting, and letters sent to the school, all demonstrate that they are extremely appreciative of the school and its work. They think it has very many strengths, and that the children like school and make good progress. They were less happy with the arrangements to help their child settle in, and with the school's seeking of their views. The inspectors agree that the school provides limited formal ways of collecting evidence from parents, such as questionnaires, for their views to be gathered. However, they did note that there were many informal ways in which parent views were taken into account and that this was generally successful. They also found that the arrangements for new pupils to settle in were very good.
33. The quality of documentation provided to parents is very good. The newsletters are detailed and cover every aspect of school life. Pupils' annual reports appropriately include information about their progress, and mostly give areas for development for English and mathematics. Parents receive details about what their child is studying in each subject each term, so they can be involved in their learning.
34. The contribution of links with parents to pupils' learning at home and at school is excellent. Educational evenings have been held for mathematics and reading. The IMPACT mathematics scheme, a school-led initiative, demonstrates the very strong partnership between parents and the school, which has impacted well on the standards in mathematics. There is very high



attendance by parents at parents' evenings, educational evenings and events. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that the homework diary is used very well as a link between home and school. A large number of parents help in the school on a regular basis. During the inspection, five were seen supporting pupils in a Key Stage 1 art lesson. Clear written instructions had been given to them previously so they were well prepared. The parent teacher association is a very supportive body to the school and raises considerable funds each year. Some of these have been used to develop the school playground into a very pleasant environment.

35. The school has very good links with the wider community. There are a wide range of organisations, groups and individuals from the community which enrich the curriculum and help the pupils to gain an understanding of society. Two outside sporting agencies, Charlton Athletic Community Scheme and Kent County Cricket Club work with effectively with the pupils. There is a very wide range of visitors to the school, such as the police, poets and musicians. Many groups perform at the school, such as the Young Shakespeare Company, who presented Macbeth. The school has a strong involvement with the Bexley Music Centre and participates in Barbican concerts. All of these activities and events contribute greatly to pupils' learning.
36. In addition, the Local Education Authority, with the support of the school held a six-week course for the parents of pupils in Years 3 and 4, called 'keeping up with children'. This provided parents with information about literacy and numeracy, and how best to help their children succeed in these areas. Parents who completed the course said that they gained a greater understanding of the strategies that they can use to support their child's learning. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting also commented favourably on the course.
37. Pupils' transfer to secondary schools is well developed. Strong links are established with the local schools to which most pupils transfer, through work experience and sport. Staff of secondary schools visit St Stephen's to meet pupils and to observe the ways in which pupils are taught and learn.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The school is very well led by the headteacher, with very good support from the deputy headteacher and good support from other key staff. The school is very effectively governed by a strong team of committed governors, who meet all statutory requirements. Effective management structures and procedures underpin the everyday work of the school, and subject co-ordinators carry out their role well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have provided very good leadership. This has been specifically focused on improving the school's overall effectiveness since the last inspection, and by raising standards in English and mathematics.
- The governing body is very effective in carrying out its statutory role and as a 'critical friend'.
- Financial management is very efficient.
- The subject leaders in English and mathematics are very effective in carrying out their role.
- There are too few senior managers within the school. This results in the head and deputy headteacher maintaining too much responsibility for aspects of the school that others could lead on.

### **Commentary**

#### *Leadership*

38. The headteacher has very effectively established a successful school where staff are united in providing the very best for pupils' all round development. The key to the success of the school

has been the raising of standards and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. The success in these areas has been combined with an inclusive approach to learning and an emphasis on ensuring that the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully met.

39. The head and deputy headteacher have had a particular focus on standards in Key Stage 1 which were an issue at the last inspection. The careful planning, the emphasis on training for staff and the involvement of parents in supporting pupils' learning has helped raise standards in this key stage to a very high level. There is a very positive climate for learning within the school. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very appreciative of this and spoke very highly of the leadership of the headteacher.

### *Management*

40. Overall the management of the school is very good. There are very effective procedures to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are also very good procedures for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future. The headteacher and governing body work very well as a team in ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements and that decisions are fully discussed before they are acted on. The governors are well informed and some have particular expertise which is helpful to the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor what goes on very effectively. A number of the governors visit the school regularly on an informal basis, sometimes joining with groups of pupils to support their learning. Staff new to the school have responded positively to the support they have been given. Arrangements for professional development are good.
41. Staff with subject co-ordination roles carry out their responsibilities well. This is especially the case for literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan effectively together, share resources efficiently and maintain clear and well thought through systems for the monitoring of pupils' progress within each subject area. The head and deputy headteacher, however, carry too large a work load in the running of the school. The headteacher recognises the need to extend responsibilities amongst teachers and to pass on some management duties to key staff. This process has already begun with additional non-contact time being given to the deputy headteacher and responsibility for citizenship being given to a Year 6 teacher.
42. The school has clear procedures for evaluating its success and operates them well. The head and deputy headteachers' analysis of pupils' performance in national tests is very detailed and provides a clear picture of standards and improvement for staff and governors. All subject co-ordinators report back to the headteacher on a regular basis and examples of pupils' moderated work are regularly collected. Procedures for monitoring other aspects of the school's work are well developed, including, for example, ensuring that resources are appropriately maintained, accommodation is used effectively and that learning support assistants are both well used and receive appropriate training.

### **Finances**

43. The management of the school's finances is very good. The headteacher, chair of governors and head of the finance committee meet regularly to ensure that spending is properly planned for and that the principles of best value are carried out. The school secretaries are very efficient in carrying out their administrative tasks and the most recent auditor's report was very favourable. The financial information below shows that the school has a relatively small balance to move forward to the next financial year. The larger than average carry forward from 2002 was appropriately used to upgrade parts of the school and school grounds. The carry forward into 2003 is being effectively used to remodel the outside play area adjacent to the reception area.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	906,477
Total expenditure	867,056
Expenditure per pupil	2,115

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous Year	91,150
Balance carried forward to the next	39,421

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

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

**Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good** and has been maintained since the last inspection. Children are prepared very well for transfer into Year 1. The children enter Reception in the September and January before they are five and are split between two Reception classes. Both classes were quite small at the time of the inspection but are due to fill to capacity in January when younger children join the school. The majority of pupils have attended some form of pre-school provision and the school takes in children from 19 different pre-school providers. All children achieve well because teaching is good with some very good features. The curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to the children's needs. All adults provide excellent role models for children and manage them very well. All members of staff work well as a cohesive team and children's progress is carefully monitored and tracked. The accommodation inside is satisfactory but the outside facilities are limited due to having no secure play area designated for the Foundation Stage. However, as part of on-going playground developments, the Foundation Stage is due to have a designated, secure outdoor area in spring 2004. At the moment, the children do not have continuous access to the outside area but appropriate outdoor activities are planned on three afternoons each week, and staff and pupils make the very best of the current limited area and resources.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well because teaching is good and all staff have high expectations of children's work and behaviour.
- All adults provide excellent role models for children and treat children in a calm, courteous and respectful manner that is reflected back in the children's behaviour and attitudes.
- Consistent, supportive relationships enable children to feel confident and secure.

### **Commentary**

44. Pupils generally come into the school with personal, social and emotional development that is above that expected for children of their age. There are very few children who find it hard to conform to the high expectations set by staff.
45. Children are rapidly, sensitively and effectively inducted into school and quickly understand the boundaries and expectations that teachers and other staff have. The calm, consistent approach of all staff in the Foundation Stage helps children to settle quickly and readily learn the correct way to behave. Children know the classroom routines well. They settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss and behave very sensibly. The excellent teamwork of the adults in both classes gives the children superb role models for co-operation and courteous communication. Children show an interest in their work and are very keen to answer teachers' questions or offer ideas and opinions. Children concentrate well for extended periods of time and behave well, even when not directly supervised by a member of staff. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably. Children in both classes take a pride in their work and in their environment. They help each other to tidy up and do this very effectively. The supportive, consistent approach of staff enables children to establish trusting relationships and succeed in their learning.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language and literacy skills and teaching is good.

### **Commentary**

46. Most children are on course to exceed the expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Children are making good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk, listen, read and write. Children's listening skills are particularly good. All members of staff take every opportunity to develop vocabulary through probing questions and insistence on extended responses from children. For example, when playing in the outside area, the nursery nurse and support assistants continually chatted to the children, asking them questions designed to make them think about what they were doing and choose appropriate words to describe their thoughts and actions. The supportive ethos and good relationships in both classes enable children to have the confidence to talk and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say. Children enjoy books and listen attentively when they are read to. They are rapidly acquiring knowledge about books and most are beginning to use strategies for beginning reading. For example, when the book "Peace at Last" was read to them, children could identify the title page and understood the concept of an "author" as someone who writes books. Some children used their knowledge of letter sounds to work out words from the story. Children show a great enjoyment of books, which they handle with care and appreciation. Relevant links with other areas of learning, such as mathematics and art, help children to make connections and talk about the story when they are engaged on different tasks. Teachers plan a one-hour lesson each day to promote children's learning in this area. The hour is well planned and holds children's attention by ensuring that the chosen book is colourful, lively and relevant, and that a variety of challenging, practical activities are on offer to hold pupils' attention and interest. Children have plenty of opportunities to express themselves through words and pictures. They are beginning to form letters correctly and show an interest in learning how to spell words correctly.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a range of practical activities to support learning.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's mathematical development.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Most children are working at levels above what may be expected for their age and are on course to exceed expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Children can already count to ten and some can accurately count beyond this number. When asked what number follows ten, the class said, in unison, "eleven". When asked how to write number 11, at least half the class were able to explain how it is written and one child pointed out the number 11 on the clock face. Children can count and match objects to ten. They can sort objects by size and colour and can arrange objects in order on a three-dimensional graph. Teachers plan a one-hour mathematics lesson every day. The lessons are well planned and effectively promote children's mathematical development by recapping and reinforcing number knowledge. They provide children with a good range of colourful,

interesting and practical tasks that offer sufficient challenge to build on what they already know and to develop their mathematical understanding. Teachers and support staff provide very effective support for small groups of children during practical mathematical activities. Sensitive, skilful questioning by adults encourages children to talk about numbers, shapes and colours, reinforcing their thinking skills, communication skills and mathematical learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- Staff use questions effectively to enhance children's knowledge.
- Children use the computer suite on a weekly basis.

### **Commentary**

48. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels above what may be expected for their age and are on course to exceed expectations by the end of Reception Year. A good variety of appropriate activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and support their understanding. For example, a group of children worked with the teacher to play "sound lotto". They listened very attentively to a range of sounds on a tape and, when they had the picture that matched the sound on a lotto card in front of them, they covered it with a coloured disc. The teacher questioned the children very sensitively and encouraged them to listen and think carefully before answering. The children recognised most of the sounds and their answers indicated that they have a good range of general knowledge. Both Reception classes use the computer suite on a weekly basis. Each child has a log-in card with a username and password. The children are very well behaved and attentive in the computer room. They confidently use the mouse to click and open programs. Most children successfully use the keyboard to write their name on screen, although some are confused by the upper case letters on the keyboards and do not yet recognise these as corresponding to the lower case letters they see in their names. When planning activities for this area of learning, teachers often make links with the "book of the week", thereby reinforcing and connecting children's learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make the most of the limited outdoor area.
- There is no continuous access to an outside area so opportunities for development are limited.
- When outside, pupils behave in a mature, sensible and responsible way.

### **Commentary**

49. No school hall sessions were observed during the inspection but children were observed in the outside playground and indications are that most children are in line to meet the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. As the Reception classes have no designated, secure outdoor area, staff make the most of the area of general playground that has been allocated to the Foundation Stage. Activities are planned in the outdoor area for three afternoons each week and children from both classes mix well together outdoors. Because the outdoor area is not secure, or demarcated to separate it from the main playground, the children are trained and trusted not to go beyond the edge of their own classroom. They have

to imagine a line across the playground which they must not cross. They respond to this request in a mature and sensible way and stay well within the area that has been allotted to them. The children's behaviour and attitudes in the outdoor area are pleasant, courteous and focused. Teachers plan well to ensure that outdoor activities give children opportunities to develop their physical skills, including throwing, catching, balancing and riding wheeled vehicles. Children play co-operatively, showing consideration for each other and sharing equipment well. A good range of activities is provided outdoors and, whilst the core activities remain consistent each day, teachers plan a variety of different tasks which capture the children's interest and imagination. Minor bumps or incidents are dealt with quickly and calmly by teachers and support staff, who rapidly comfort and reassure any child who has been hurt or upset.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning in this area is very good and effectively supports children's learning.
- Support staff provide a high level of effective support, guidance and encouragement for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.

### **Commentary**

50. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well. A wide range of activities are planned that provide children with opportunities to develop skills in cutting, sticking, painting, drawing and making three-dimensional models. During the inspection, the creative activities were linked to the book used in literacy lessons, "Peace at Last", and children had the opportunity to paint, stencil, draw, cut out and make bears like the characters in the story. Learning support staff actively participate in activities with children and sensitively question, encourage and guide them to improve their creative skills. During the activities seen the teacher worked with individual children at the computer, showing them how to use a painting program and assessing their skill and competency with the mouse and keyboard. Children display a high level of skill during creative activities and most children are in line to exceed the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Behaviour and relationships are excellent during creative activities, with children concentrating for extended periods of time, co-operating well with each other and adults, and sharing equipment and resources in a good natured, mature way.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are very high.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Assessment is very good and is linked effectively to target setting for pupils.
- Plans for the future development of the subject are very well defined.
- The leadership and management of English is very good.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors to support the subject.
- English is not always clearly planned for across the curriculum.

#### Commentary

51. The school has continued to improve on the standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at levels well above those found nationally and this is in line with the results reported following the national tests in 2003.
52. Pupils' skills in both speaking and listening are well developed throughout the school. Those in Year 1 are confident speakers who listen carefully to the views of others. Older pupils can speak well and are able to put forward their own point of view, while listening to, and valuing, the contributions made by others. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to remember a time when they had felt foolish, sharing the moment in pairs. They then had the opportunity to share their embarrassment with the class, who listened and responded with great sensitivity.
53. Pupils' achievement in reading is high, with standards well above average by the age of seven and 11. Teachers use carefully structured methods, ensuring pupils develop a wide range of reading skills. This, together with exposure to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction text, develops an enjoyment in reading. Older pupils read fluently with very good expression, bringing the story to life. They can discuss preferences for authors and talk with enthusiasm about books they have previously read. The school has produced two excellent booklets relating to reading development. 'Reading with your child' for the younger pupils and 'Hooked on Books' for older pupils provide very good resources for parents as they support their child with the development of their reading.
54. Pupils' skills in writing are developing well throughout the school, with high standards evident. Both boys and girls achieve equally well in their writing. This does not follow the national trend, where girls out-perform boys. The school has focused on improving writing across the curriculum and this has been very effective. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to support the curriculum. Pupils have written very good reviews and show a good understanding of Macbeth following a visit by the Young Shakespeare Company. They also developed their skills as reporters and in the use of information and communication technology, with a visit to The Guardian newspaper. The literacy hour structure is used flexibly in some classes and this is having a positive effect by providing opportunities for extended writing.
55. The overall quality of both teaching and learning is very good. This, together with the pupils' very positive attitudes during their lessons, results in high levels of achievement. The best teaching was marked by enthusiasm, excellent knowledge of the subject, high quality relationships within the classroom and often a sense of humour. At these times, pupils really enjoy their lessons and are motivated to work and become completely engrossed in the task. An example occurred in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher's animated telling of the 'Alien' story resulted in the pupils enthusiastically analysing the text before applying it to what could have



been a mundane exercise to develop punctuation. In Year 6, the teacher's enthusiasm for poetry inspired pupils to write poems relating to the urgency of the moment, resulting in some very good work related to the 'Race to go on Holiday'. There are very good examples of teachers' marking of pupils' work, which give very detailed areas for development and improvement. This is particularly evident where pupils use writing journals and is having a very positive effect on the raising of standards.

56. Assessment opportunities are very well used to both analyse performance and to plan for individual pupil improvement. This is very effectively linked to the setting of pupils' targets. The school is beginning to encourage pupils to be more involved in the setting of their own targets, and plans are in place to extend this feature across all aspects of English.
57. Teachers are aware of higher attaining pupils and they are challenged very effectively. Very good use is made of teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to the teaching and learning of pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make very good progress.
58. The leadership and management of English are very good, with the subject focusing strongly in the school development plan. Areas for future improvement are clearly indicated to further raise standards. The school is keen to move forward further and is exploring creative ways to support pupils' work in English and instil an enjoyment of the subject in all.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. The school has focused on identifying and developing this aspect of the curriculum and there is good evidence that work in this area has improved. Good examples of developing pupils' language skills were, for example, observed in a number of science and art lessons. While individual teachers do plan for the teaching of English within other curriculum areas, it is not, however, consistently identified or reviewed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**. The high standard of subject leadership has resulted in very good improvements in provision since the last inspection, enabling pupils to achieve very well in mathematics.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving and at both key stages are well above national averages.
- From their different starting points, all pupils achieve very well.
- Teachers are expert in mathematics and know how to teach it very effectively.
- The excellent organisation of homework fully involves parents in their pupils' learning.
- Pupils are regularly assessed to ensure that teachers, pupils and parents know and act on their targets.
- Teachers give highly constructive feedback to pupils through marking.
- The deputy head, a leading mathematics teacher, leads the subject exceptionally well and has built a very effective team of teachers.
- Mathematics is not always clearly planned for across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

60. In their National Curriculum tests, pupils attain very highly in mathematics compared to the national averages for pupils at the end of both key stages. In the autumn term, pupils in Year 2 are attaining well, for example, partitioning numbers to 20, using standard units of time, estimating lengths using standard measures, and identifying the names and some properties of two-dimensional shapes. By the beginning of Year 6, pupils have learned to calculate the

percentages of quantities of food components, solve problems including ratios, use brackets in their calculations and identify all of the axes of symmetry of quadrilaterals.

61. All pupils achieve very well at both key stages because they are consistently challenged by their teachers' well-focused questions to solve problems and to extend their understanding. The very good support of learning support assistants in all classes complements teaching and enables pupils who find mathematics difficult, including those with statements of special educational needs, to benefit from the main teaching in lessons. Both boys and girls achieve very well in this subject.
62. Pupils learn very well in mathematics and achieve highly because of the very good standards of teaching. This is because:
- Teachers' expertise in mathematics is regularly developed through training linked to the National Strategy.
  - Outcomes of training are used very well to help pupils attain higher levels.
  - Sensitive marking rewards pupils' successes and very positive comments provide high quality guidance to pupils.
  - Teachers' careful and very regular assessment of pupils' learning enables them to set appropriate tasks for all pupils in class to further develop their knowledge and understanding.
  - The very good relationships between school and home allow parents to work very productively with their children to support their learning at school.
63. Since the last inspection and the appointment of a new co-ordinator, mathematics has improved very much. It was then a key issue and is now a significant strength of the school. The co-ordinator, working closely with the headteacher, has led innovations exceptionally well. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced a year early in response to the findings of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has transformed work with parents and pupils' homework by adapting IMPACT mathematics, a school-based programme, and providing training for parents to work with their children at home. She has improved teachers' understanding of mathematics teaching, making full use of opportunities for training and enabling colleagues to learn from other colleagues. The co-ordinator has put into place high quality systems to track pupils' progress and drive up standards through the setting of targets at individual, class and school levels. As a result of imaginative and committed leadership, large strides have been made in improving provision for mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. Pupils use mathematics in other subjects and develop their appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, pupils in art explored the symmetry of faces, displaying digital photographs of half faces opposite careful drawings of the other half face. They also completed graphs when measuring the loss of heat during a science experiment. However, while other examples of mathematics being used across the curriculum are in evidence, the systematic planning of such opportunities in other subjects is as yet underdeveloped.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the good, and sometimes very good, teaching in this subject.
- There is a good emphasis on investigation and the using of correct scientific vocabulary.
- Teachers plan well for science and have good systems for assessing the progress of pupils.
- Learning support assistants are very effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs in science lessons.
- There is an insufficient use of information and communication technology to support science.

### Commentary

65. Since the last inspection, standards in science have remained high in Key Stage 1 and have risen in Key Stage 2. Most pupils are working above national expectations with a high percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels in both key stages. Boys' achievements in science are in line with those of girls. This is a significant achievement and results from the inclusive practices within the classrooms and the insistence on high standards in all aspects of pupils' work. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well as a result of both good teaching and the support given to them by learning support assistants.
66. Pupils are well taught in science and as a result achieve well. There is a strong emphasis on the learning of investigative skills and pupils understand the importance of a fair test. There is also an insistence on the correct use of scientific vocabulary, which ensures that pupils fully understand scientific terms. Experiments are successfully carried out in the classroom and very good use is made of the school grounds to extend this work with, for example, pupils in Year 2 testing the effect of 'push' and 'pull' on bikes and scooters in the school playground. Teachers also have a good knowledge of the science curriculum and are able to talk confidently with pupils when discussing complicated issues. This was particularly the case in discussions held between teachers and pupils in Year 5 about micro-organisms and the food supply and, in Year 6, about how sound travels. This good teacher knowledge, together with high expectations of what pupils can achieve, helps them to make good progress.
67. The leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. She works well with other teachers and ensures that planning in this subject covers all the areas of the National Curriculum and meets statutory requirements. Pupils' work in science is regularly collected and moderated by teachers to assess how far pupils have progressed. The co-ordinator ensures that resources are well-maintained and kept up to date. In particular, she is gathering a range of interactive CD-Roms in science that can be used on the computer to support teaching and capture pupils' attention. While she has made a good start on this, further resources for information and communication technology are required in order to make this an effective part of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has attended a number of local courses about managing the science curriculum and has passed on her knowledge to other teachers in the school to good effect.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Where information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject, teaching and learning are good.
- The standard of pupils' work is broadly average by Years 2 and 6.

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is effective.
- Resources are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Links with other subjects are underdeveloped.
- Systems for assessing the progress in information and communication technology need to be improved.

## Commentary

68. Standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are judged as similar to those found nationally. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when standards were found to be below those expected nationally. The school has effectively addressed the issues identified and in particular has invested in developing very good resources in the core subjects for the teaching of information and communication technology. The new computer suite now provides opportunities for all children to be taught regularly with first class facilities and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement.
69. In the Reception class pupils are taught appropriately and are effectively introduced to a variety of computer-aided skills. A PowerPoint presentation, for example, engaged and supported pupils' learning as they were taught a literacy lesson related to phonics. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, with teachers showing appropriate subject knowledge. In Year 2, for example, pupils were observed entering and amending the text in a poem. Using a mouse and the keyboard, they were also able to move single words and sentences around the computer screen with a high degree of skill. The concentration on basic computer skills in the core subjects is maintained in Key Stage 2, where, for example, in a good lesson in Year 5, pupils were introduced to an on-screen turtle which they programmed to construct a number of mathematical shapes. However, this was an opportunity missed to make a planned link to their work in mathematics, which would have developed further their understanding of the properties of geometric figures. In Year 6, pupils were developing a multimedia presentation, using moving text and clipart directly linked to a science module, 'The earth in Space', before planning a search of the Kennedy Space Centre web page. These planned links, however, are rare, a point that the co-ordinator and headteacher recognise. Currently, pupils view information and communication technology as a separate subject and not as one to support their work in other areas.
70. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology are consistently positive and they approach their work with real enthusiasm. They share their resources well and are willing to discuss and refine their work following discussion. Very good use is made of teaching assistants to support all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to this support, as well as benefiting from a range of other information and communication technology resources, such as keyboards with large keys, special monitors and software, purchased to meet their individual need.
71. The school has identified that assessment opportunities in information and communication technology need to be identified and related to teachers' planning. Currently, teachers do not have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities and in particular the skills they bring to school. The school recognises that this is essential if standards are to be raised further.
72. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are good with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator newly in post. There is a well-defined action plan, which clearly links staff training needs and the development of resources to improving provision. An important feature of the action plan is the intention to release the co-ordinator to observe lessons in order to advise and support colleagues so that they are able to deliver high quality lessons in this subject.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. While information and communication technology is used within other curriculum areas, most notably in science, teachers' planning does not yet consistently cover its use in other curriculum areas. As a result, opportunities are missed to develop and apply pupils' skills in different areas.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography and history

Provision in history and geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations by Year 2 and by Year 6.
- Leadership and management are good.

#### Commentary

74. Two lessons were observed in geography and three in history. These observations, together with time spent reviewing pupils' books and looking at displays, shows that standards achieved by the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. This is similar to the judgments made during the previous inspection. Planning for both subjects is very well linked to the national guidance documents, providing a good scheme of work, which covers all the required skills.
75. Through the lessons observed, teaching and pupils' learning are at least satisfactory, with the majority being judged as good and some examples of very good practice. Pupils' attitudes to both geography and history are very positive. They concentrate fully and apply themselves well, showing a high level of interest. This results in very good levels of achievement. Good use is made of learning support assistants and this results in pupils with special educational needs achieving well.
76. In **geography**, the pupils in Year 2 are developing a good understanding of other cultures by studying a village in Mexico. They are able to make detailed comparisons between their own and the villagers' way of life, particularly in the areas of home and school. Good teaching encouraged them to think very carefully about how differently their lifestyle is from the family in Mexico. In Year 3, pupils identified and planned routes around the school before transferring their newly acquired skills to a local street map.
77. During their **history** lesson, pupils in Year 1 were comparing the differences between old and new teddy bears, developing a good concept of time. The teacher's very detailed questioning and her understanding of how to bring history alive ensured that all pupils were actively involved and achieving well. In Year 6, a very good lesson was observed where pupils were acting as detectives, having been asked to construct a range of detailed questions that could be used to identify artefacts from the Victorian period. This lesson really extended pupils understanding of Victorian social history and provoked much thoughtful discussion.
78. The leadership and management of geography and history are good, with an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. There are clear plans for and a vision to further improve the provision in both subjects. The scheme of work is to be reviewed, looking in particular into how the subjects can be linked with other areas of the curriculum. Humanities are therefore well placed to improve further.

## Religious education

Religious education was not a focus for this inspection. It will be inspected as part of a section 23 inspection, undertaken by the local diocese.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Commentary

79. Only one **design and technology** lesson and three **art and design** lessons were observed during the inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision, although evidence from pupils' work indicates that it is at least satisfactory in these two areas. Five **music** lessons were seen and overall provision in this subject was good. In addition to observing lessons, discussions were held with the co-ordinator, as well as looking at pupils' work and displays around the school.
80. It is evident from teachers' planning, and discussions with the subject leader, that work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Displays around the school indicate that pupils in all Year groups have the opportunity to paint, draw, make models and produce large collages. There has been a recent emphasis on producing collaborative pieces of art and a Year 1 lesson on portraits brought together two classes from this Year group, along with parent helpers, support assistants and teachers, to produce large life-like portraits and large portraits in the style of Picasso. During this lesson, pupils worked well, in groups of between six and eight, with a wide range of resources and materials which had been pre-selected by the teachers. They produced work of a high standard, and sustained focus and concentration for an extended period of time, sharing equipment and taking turns in a patient and good-natured manner.
81. In the one lesson seen in **design and technology**, the standard of teaching was satisfactory and standards were just in line with expectations. However, the subject leader does not have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to make choices about the designs and materials they can use. For example, in the lesson seen, Year 4 pupils were sewing their initials onto a piece of binca fabric, but they were not given the opportunity to decide where to put their initials or how to write them because the teacher had already stencilled each pupil's initials onto the fabric for them, neither were they given any choice over the colour of thread they could use as the teacher had pre-cut the thread and distributed it around on pupils' desks. Pupils did not evaluate their work or that of their classmates. Discussion with the subject leader indicates that resources for the subject are only satisfactory and that the school relies heavily on outside providers to lead design and technology sessions for specified Year groups.
82. In music, pupils from the infants and juniors were observed in **music** lessons and the older pupils were observed during a singing assembly. It is clear that the very high level of subject expertise of the part-time subject leader is used very well to help pupils to move forward, with some excellent teaching being observed. There is very good co-ordination and liaison between the part-time subject leader, the full-time shadow co-ordinator, other teachers and visiting music tutors which positively impacts on pupils' learning and achievement in music. Work seen in music lessons indicates that standards are above average, with singing being a particular strength. Pupils sing tunefully and their excellent listening skills enable them to learn songs quickly and accurately. Teachers take time to explain the meaning of lyrics and encourage pupils to respond emotionally to the "feeling" of music and songs and these impact very positively on pupils' spiritual development.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in physical education are above expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and work hard.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good use is made of outside agencies.

### **Commentary**

83. Four lessons were observed in physical education with standards in Year 2 and Year 6 being above national expectations. This is an improvement on the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection when standards were judged as broadly in line. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported during their lessons and achieve well.
84. Teaching and learning are mostly good, marked by teachers enthusiastically involved with the pupils as they develop their skills. This was particularly so in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were involved in a dance activity interpreting part of the willow pattern story. Pupils were shown how, and encouraged to march with stern expressions on their faces as they imitated an invading army. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all.
85. All lessons begin with a warm up activity and end with a cooling down session, which is a good feature. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their skills to the class, which allows others to reflect upon, and then try to improve their own performance. All pupils work very hard throughout their lessons and have very positive attitudes which, together with good teaching, results in a good level of achievement.
86. The school uses a wide range of supporting agencies to enhance and develop its work in physical education. These include links with a local premiership football club and specialist cricket coaching. Pupils are given good opportunities to compete against other schools and, although they do not have a field of their own, still enjoy a high level of success, particularly in football. Throughout the year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taken to the local swimming pool for their lessons.
87. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory with the co-ordinator advising and supporting staff where needed. The scheme of work for physical education follows the national guidance.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

No separate lessons were observed in this subject and so no overall judgments are made about overall progress.

### **Commentary**

88. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. There is a good programme of activities, including work on diet, health, sex education, drug awareness and personal safety. This programme, mainly delivered through science, religious education and during assemblies, supports pupils in developing a safe and healthy life style, gaining in confidence and work with others. In those lessons where aspects of personal, social and health education were taught, it was delivered well. Provision for personal, social and health

education is, however, not fully mapped across the curriculum and as a result lacks a clear direction.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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



