

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dartford, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118587

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Hindle

Lead inspector: David G Collard

Dates of inspection: 1st - 4th March 2004

Inspection number: 258353

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 5 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 490

School address: Dartford Road
Dartford
Kent

Postcode: DA1 3DZ

Telephone number: (01322) 226 019

Fax number: (01322) 220 121

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Poulton

Date of previous inspection: 27th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

West Hill Primary is an urban school situated in the town of Dartford, Kent. The school is very popular amongst parents and a number have specifically moved within the catchment area. Children enter the school at five years of age with standards that are at average levels. Very few pupils leave the school before Year 6. There are 490 pupils on roll with roughly the same numbers of boys and girls. Most families live in privately owned housing but there are some in rental accommodation. Ten per cent of the pupils come from a minority ethnic background, the largest proportion (3.3 per cent) being of Asian origin. Six pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Fourteen per cent of pupils have some form of special educational need, a lower percentage than nationally. Approximately half of these have specific learning difficulties whilst other needs include speech and communication difficulties, or behavioural problems. 0.6 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need. The school received an achievement award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11122	David Collard	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History English as an additional language
9465	Elizabeth Cooke	Lay inspector	
23354	Evelyn Adams	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Foundation Stage
27602	Richard Perkins	Team inspector	English Modern foreign languages Special educational needs
19817	Judith Dowsett	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7 - 10
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10 - 15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17 - 30
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **sound education** with some notable strengths. At the heart of all developments is the wish to provide a supportive but challenging environment for learning so that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Standards have risen faster than the national trend and are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is at least sound throughout the school but good in the Foundation Stage and the infants. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is purposeful and enriched by a wide range of opportunities in other activities. Sound leadership and good management ensure that there is a clear educational direction and governors are fully involved. The school has established very good links with other schools and colleges and is highly regarded by parents. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Performance in national tests is above average, although boys do not do as well as girls in writing.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage, the infants and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- There is a lack of independent working in science.
- The personal development of pupils is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to studying and their behaviour is good.
- The school has very good international links and links with other local educational institutions.
- Management is good and the financial controls are secure but the role of the subject leaders is underdeveloped and more resources are needed in science.

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards have improved and the planning of lessons is now more cohesive. It is linked well to the needs of the mixed age classes and coverage is at least adequate in all subjects and often better. Assessment is used effectively to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils and is targeted at providing support for those pupils who most need it. There is still some variation in the quality of marking. The information for parents is much improved but parents are still concerned about the lines of communication. Those areas that were considered strong in the last report, such as the behaviour of pupils and the systems for care and welfare support, have been maintained at a high level. The role of co-ordinators has improved but not enough has been done to allow all of them to monitor the quality of teaching and to give them a complete overview of their subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement through the school is **sound**. It is good through the Foundation Stage, where the majority reach standards above those nationally by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is equally good through the infants. In Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology, geography and history because of the challenging teaching. Standards by the end of Year 6 are also above average. Achievement is sound overall in the juniors and good in mathematics, geography and history because the teachers have good subject knowledge and link work well across the curriculum. Achievement in English is satisfactory but girls have much better writing skills than boys. This is why the results were well

below average when measured against similar schools in the 2003 national tests. All pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening. Standards in science, although average, are better in national tests. They could be improved if pupils were allowed to use their investigational and experimental skills more independently. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Those with English as an additional language and from ethnic minorities make similar levels of progress to others in the school.

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are fostered well. The school is calm and orderly and there is a relaxed environment for learning. Spiritual awareness is evident and pupils are developing good social skills. They follow a strong moral code and there are many opportunities to develop cultural understanding in history and geography as well as in the exemplary use of lessons devoted to French, German, Japanese and a number of other languages at different times of the school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The sound quality of education is characterised by **satisfactory** teaching and learning. Higher and lower attaining pupils are supported well in their learning either by the direct support of adults or by specific work tailored to their needs. Those in the lower half of the middle ability range are not always given the same level of direct support. The better use of assessment is identifying those pupils who are not achieving so well and further support is being provided as well as targeted groupwork to ensure they make the same level of progress. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage and the infants is better adjusted to the needs of all levels of attainment and this is why each year group as a whole achieves well. The curriculum provides many interesting extras such as a very wide range of clubs, visits, visitors and the use of well-integrated topics that combine skills across a number of subjects. This is a strength of the provision and pupils talk enthusiastically about enjoying their work and willingly undertake comprehensive homework. Relationships are good throughout the school and pupils are able to voice their opinions within the school council. However, not enough is done to allow pupils to take charge of their own learning through the use of individual target setting.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **sound** and management is good. The headteacher has a clear vision about raising achievement and how this will be done. She is supported by a confident senior management team and a second tier of managers. Whilst those on the senior management team are able to undertake a full range of evaluation, this is not extended to a formal programme for other subject leaders. As a result, in some subjects, such as science and information and communication technology, the co-ordinators are not completely aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching across the school and whether initiatives are being carried through. However, they have a much better understanding about the planning and work that is completed by pupils. The governors provide effective support and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They challenge and intervene in decisions and ensure that financial management is very secure.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are satisfied with the opportunities provided by the school and are proud of what is achieved. In general, the parents are very supportive but a substantial number still feel that communication between them and the school is not effective. Whilst it is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for this, the school is preparing to canvass opinions and to adjust its procedures. In contrast, there is very effective communication in the Reception classes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve achievement in writing, particularly by boys and by those in the lower half of the middle ability range.
- Provide opportunities for more independent working in science.
- Develop the monitoring role of co-ordinators and so improve their assessment of the provision in their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **above average**, particularly in mathematics. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and the infants, and soundly through the juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment is above average in mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, history and in science in national tests.
- Attainment by age seven is above average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Children in the Reception year and in the infants achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with above average ability achieve well.
- Pupils reach good standards in speaking and listening.
- The school provides a broad, relevant curriculum that ensures achievement in all subjects is at least sound and provides a good introduction to modern foreign languages.

Commentary

1. Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception class and through the infants. By the end of the juniors, the achievement of pupils is good for those with special educational needs and for those with higher ability but does not always provide sufficient challenge for those in the middle ability range. Despite this, standards have improved since the last inspection faster than those nationally. In English, they rose steeply between 1999 and 2001 but, whilst still being above the national average, have fallen back slightly since then. In mathematics and science there has been a steep and continuous rise which, according to the good accurate analysis of assessment data, is set to continue. The main reason for this improvement is the way in which the school has improved teachers' planning and the expectations about what pupils are capable of achieving.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.3 (28.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.3 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the Reception Year children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop both academically and socially because the teaching is focused well on providing a balance of experiences linked to the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals (ELGs). A significant number exceed these goals and are already starting work within the National Curriculum before the age of six. The teachers cleverly ensure, however, that these children are able to develop their maturity by providing different methods of play within small and larger groups while advancing their academic performance.
3. In English, standards are above average in the infants, which is better than last year's national tests, when they were average. In reading, more pupils achieved the higher Level 3 than those nationally but the trend was reversed in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are now average, a considerable improvement on the 2003 national tests, when they were well below

average. These fluctuations are due to the difference in the performance of boys and girls in writing. The school's analysis indicates that a much smaller number of boys achieved the higher Level 5 and there has been a concentrated programme put in place to improve their performance. This has included reviewing the types of books and texts that might appeal to boys. There still needs to be a wider range of opportunities for pupils to use their good knowledge of language to produce more extended pieces of writing.

4. The speaking and listening skills of all pupils are good despite the increasing number of pupils who enter the school with speech and language problems. Teachers ensure that a high emphasis is placed on pupils being able to express their ideas and to ask and answer searching questions in discussions. Literacy and language are used soundly across the curriculum in class and through homework. The school has introduced the teaching of modern foreign languages well, including French, German and Japanese, and a basic level of Latin using Baccalaureate students. Achievement in these subjects is high. This is being used to help develop an understanding of the use of language and the results are being studied by an outside agency to see the effect it has on the standards in English.
5. Standards in mathematics are good. In the infants, they are now above average compared to the average scores in last year's national tests. In the juniors, standards in the national tests were above average and these are reflected in the present Year 6. There has been a considerable improvement in the provision because the teaching and learning are good. The quality of questioning, appropriate work and consistent planning all contribute to both boys and girls achieving well. The different strands of the subject are balanced and data handling has become increasingly used, both in mathematics lessons and in the use of computer technology. In addition, teachers are giving pupils the opportunity to use the knowledge they have in real-life situations.
6. Standards in science are average but the trend in the Year 6 national tests is improving more rapidly than in the majority of other schools. Pupils have a good general knowledge that enables them to develop their scientific understanding. Whilst there is some investigation and experimental work, these are areas that still need more attention as pupils are too often closely directed and this limits their independence. This is particularly the case in the juniors, where there is some variation in the time given to the subject. Good support is being given to improve factual knowledge and understanding and this is why pupils perform better in test situations.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above those expected in the infants and the juniors. Pupils achieve well in the infants and at the expected level in the juniors. Since the last inspection, the provision for the subject has improved through the development of a substantial training programme for teachers and this has had a positive effect on the confidence and competence of all staff. Its full effect has not yet been seen in the juniors but the indications are that the improvement will continue. Good use is made of technology to promote better learning in other subjects and, as in mathematics and science, there is a concentrated effort to ensure that all skills link well to relevant and real-life experiences.
8. The provision for other subjects is at least sound and the standards and achievement in geography and history are good. A strength of the curriculum is the way that subjects are linked well together and this enables pupils to develop their understanding across a range of key skills. For instance, pupils draw maps and diagrams when studying history topics and art is used well to link work in design and technology. Good emphasis is placed on developing personal, social and health education as well as citizenship.
9. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, both in class and through withdrawal groups. Their individual education plans (IEPs) comprehensively outline what needs to be done to help them improve and their performance is monitored carefully. Their achievement is good. Pupils with above average ability also make good progress, although it is not so rapid in English. Pupils in the lower half of the middle ability range, whilst achieving suitably, are not

always challenged as well as they might be. Work for this group is set according to their need but they are often not given as high a level of adult support as other groups. Pupils from ethnic minorities show little difference in their achievement from other pupils in the school; their standards are monitored to ensure that they make equal progress and extra support is provided when it is needed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes pupils' personal development **well**. Pupils' attendance and attitudes are **very good** and behaviour is **good**. Relationships are very good throughout the school community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school; attendance and punctuality levels are high.
- The school is a caring and safe place of learning where children learn to work co-operatively.
- The school encourages pupils to take on more responsibilities as they get older.
- There is a strong expectation of good behaviour from staff and the pupils respond well.
- Pupils are courteous, confident and relate well to adults and each other.
- Provision is good for social, moral and cultural development and sound for spiritual development.

Commentary

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and learning. Attendance rates are well above national averages and pupils arrive on time each day. Attendance would be even better if the number of families taking time off in term time for holidays were reduced. There have been no exclusions recently. The school has successfully maintained the good standards previously reported in this aspect of its work.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.2
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.

11. Pupils enjoy school. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a good place to be, it provides a caring and stimulating environment for learning. Pupils' ability to listen, work productively together, concentrate and be independent develops well as they move through the school. As a consequence, the oldest pupils are mature, sensible, independent learners. Pupils of different ages have good opportunities to work and play together, for example, the Year 6 pupils support the youngest by regularly hearing them read. The school council meets regularly and pupils value highly the contribution they make to school life through this. Parents are very pleased with the way the school helps their children to develop and mature. This is underlined by the fact the school is heavily oversubscribed.
12. Pupils behave well because their carers and staff encourage and expect them to. The school is an orderly place and the management of behaviour is consistently positive, supported by the behaviour policy and reward systems, which are well understood by the pupils. Staff set a very good example to pupils. The vast majority of pupils pay attention to the teachers and to each other and follow instructions well. For example, in a Year 5/6 history lesson pupils responded admirably to the teacher's very high expectations by working very hard throughout the lesson on Henry VIII's decisions. Their interest was sparked and maintained by the teacher's strong subject knowledge and skilfully targeted support to individuals. Where teaching is less successful, pupils sometimes fidget and chat as the lesson pace slows. Behaviour at play and

lunchtimes is good, with calm supervision and a good range of play equipment supporting good natured, vigorous play.

13. Relationships within the school are very good. All adults in the school know pupils well and show care and respect for the children in their charge. Boys and girls from all age groups and backgrounds are kind and friendly towards each other. They are welcoming to visitors, chatting confidently about their work and showing politeness and courtesy. No bullying or racist behaviour was seen during the inspection week, although incidents do occur from time to time. These are dealt with firmly and promptly. Parents rightly regard the school as a fair place where equality of opportunity is highly valued.
14. Provision for social development is very good. Children mix very well in lessons and to a lesser extent at playtime, although boys and girls play football together. Pupils take good care of resources and premises. Older pupils carry out monitor roles at lunchtime with great enthusiasm and a strong sense of responsibility. There is a wide range of sporting and cultural clubs for pupils to attend in their own time, including a class led by students from Dartford Grammar School. Special lessons are used to promote self-esteem and personal worth.
15. Provision for moral and cultural education is good. From the time they enter the Reception class children are made aware of the difference between right and wrong and have the opportunity to negotiate classroom rules. The record book shows a very low level of racist or sexist incidents. There is a very wide range of links with schools in other countries as a result of French, Japanese and German teaching. Religious education lessons give children an insight into the cultures associated with different religions. Children participate in musical and artistic activities of different cultures, such as the recent visit to Years 5 and 6 by Bhangra Dancers.
16. Spiritual development is satisfactory. A variety of planned themes provide formal opportunities for spiritual reflection in class and key stage assembly. The quality of presentation inevitably varies because visitors do not always have the teaching skill to convey their messages effectively. Reception classrooms are particularly joyful in their celebration of children's work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **sound**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there was a significant quantity of good or better teaching in individual lessons. The curriculum is **satisfactory** but there are significant strengths in aspects of creative, aesthetic and language provision. Pupils' care, safety and welfare are promoted **well**. Links with parents are **sound**. Links with the community are **good** and links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall but good in the Foundation Stage. The use and quality of assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in the Reception class because of the wide range of teaching methods.
- Planning and subject knowledge are good, although these are not always targeted well enough to raising the achievement of pupils within the lower half of the middle ability range.
- There are good systems to manage the behaviour of pupils.
- There is now a much better strategic use of assessment to understand and develop whole school trends, although the best practices in marking have not been shared well enough.

Commentary

17. As at the time of the last inspection, teaching has continued to be satisfactory and so pupils make sound progress. The quality ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is much smaller than was indicated in the last report because the school has worked hard at ensuring there is a common approach to challenging all pupils and that behaviour is dealt with securely.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	6 (13%)	15 (34%)	21 (47%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

18. Children in the Reception class are taught well. The staff provide good role models and plan their work carefully. This links the objectives within the Early Learning Goals as well as preparing the class for work within the National Curriculum. There is a friendly, trusting but professional approach to the work and parents are given very good information to make sure that they can help their children progress. Teachers link work within different areas of the curriculum, such as through the many opportunities to talk and listen as well as record information. In this way, they quickly develop their writing skills and are confident to share their ideas. The children enjoy school, they quietly get on with their work and, because of the teachers' confidence, are consistently challenged by what they are asked to do. Learning assistants provide effective support during practical and other activities. They are given clear guidelines about how this support will be delivered and quickly intervene if there are any difficulties.
19. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers have a good command of the subjects they are teaching and when asked searching questions by the pupils are able to use these as triggers for more advanced thinking by the class. There is a particularly good understanding about the use of cross-curricular links. Topics and themes involve key skills such as mapping and data collection as part of an overall approach to subjects such as history and science. There is now a better understanding about the use of information and communication technology and, as a result, lessons across other subjects are much better integrated.
20. Teachers have good relationships with individuals and in the overwhelming number of lessons pupils behave well. The majority say that they are pleased with what they are asked to do and feel that the teachers enjoy their company. The various levels of ability are given sufficient challenge through a suitable range of different teaching methods and through organising the class in a variety of ways. Those with lower and higher ability are well supported. They are given specific work, and for those with special educational needs, this links well to their individual education plans. Despite this, a number of lessons do not provide enough challenge for those within the lower half of the middle ability range because the teachers focus too much attention on those at either end of the ability spectrum. This is a contributory reason for the number of pupils who do not do as well in national tests at the end of Year 6. It was particularly noticeable in the unsatisfactory lessons seen. In an English lesson in the infants, the pupils only made progress in group work when they were with the teacher because the activity was insufficiently challenging and so little was achieved. As a result, the behaviour of some pupils deteriorated and this disrupted the learning of some others. This contrasted with another English lesson in the juniors. Here, the pupils made good progress because the range of teaching methods was planned to raise the understanding of all levels of ability and the pupils were highly focused on thinking about the answers. On occasions, the organisation of lessons relies too heavily on a teacher directing the work and this restricts the amount that pupils can achieve independently. It improves their knowledge base but does not develop a better and deeper understanding about the topic being studied.

21. Lessons always start on time. In the best cases, a clear objective is shared at the beginning about what will be learnt and reference is made to this during and at the end of the session. In this way, pupils are able to gauge for themselves whether they have made acceptable progress and what needs to be done to improve. Marking is undertaken conscientiously but ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the best cases, it builds upon what has gone on in class and there are high expectations about presentation and work rate. Homework is used to enhance what has happened in class or to provide research for new themes. Much of this is undertaken extremely conscientiously, although some parents are concerned that they do not have enough information about what they can do to provide extra support or that the level of homework is too high. Much of this problem is due to the very high aspirations of some parents, although the school needs to do more to ensure that the school explains its intentions more clearly.
22. Assessment has improved since the last inspection, especially in the analysis of overall trends on the basis of both internal and external tests. This is helping the school to develop a more coherent strategy for raising achievement and to deal with the fluctuating national test results. It has also helped teachers identify pupils who could do better and to target extra support in the correct way. The senior management team is undertaking much of this work, although co-ordinators are increasingly involved. This is helping them to take a more strategic lead within their subjects and to identify what levels of monitoring and training other teachers will need. This is also now being linked to a more consistent approach to marking, some of which directly improves the achievement of pupils. Unfortunately, not all of this best practice has been shared sufficiently well.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **satisfactory**. It provides a satisfactory range of relevant and interesting curricular opportunities, which meet statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is underpinned by good schemes of work.
- Activities are not always matched to the range of pupils' abilities.
- Provision for pupils with special needs is good.
- Provision for modern foreign languages is good.
- A good range of events enhances the curriculum.
- Pupils are prepared well as they move through the school for transfer to secondary school.
- Participation in sport is good.

Commentary

23. The school provides a broad curriculum based on all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. The areas of learning are covered in the Foundation Stage. Children in the Reception class have good learning opportunities and are prepared well before they move to Year 1. This contributes significantly to their self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is underpinned by good schemes of work. Plans throughout the school consistently identify clear learning objectives but activities are not always matched to the range of pupils' prior attainment. The time devoted to subjects is variable within and between year groups. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall. The range of responsibilities for all pupils, the high expectations of pupils' conduct and the school council make a very positive contribution.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator works closely with other teachers and agencies to support pupils' needs. Achievement by

these pupils is very good in the infants and it is good in the juniors. Procedures for identifying the correct levels of support are well organised and budget planning is clear.

25. A good range of opportunities enhance the curriculum. The school organises a range of interesting and motivating visits and events, such as Science Week and Arts Week, the residential visit for Year 6 and the recent Indian dance project, which provide good enrichment. The provision for modern foreign languages is good and enriches the statutory curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have the benefit of learning Japanese, French and German as they move through the school. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs, including sport, music, Latin, chess and computers, which are well attended and benefit all junior pupils. Participation in sport is good and the school has enjoyed significant success in local, county and regional competitions. The older pupils have good links with the secondary schools and take some lessons with secondary school teachers. Homework is appropriate and, together with competence in English and mathematics, prepares Year 6 pupils well for secondary education.
26. There are sufficient teachers for each class with a range of experience and qualifications to support the curriculum. Some specialist teaching supports music. A part-time member of staff undertakes regular supply cover and ensures that science is taught to discrete year groups in the mixed Year 4/5 class. The teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilled and they make a positive contribution to the curriculum, but are mainly deployed in the infant classes.
27. The school makes effective use of the space available within the attractive accommodation. The two halls and computer suite are used appropriately throughout the day. The use of storage areas and spare rooms is under review to provide better access and specialist areas. Buildings are clean and well maintained and are generally enhanced by attractive displays, providing a good learning environment. There is some very old furniture in the juniors which restricts the use of space. Facilities for the disabled are good, as there are ramped slopes to most areas of the school.
28. Resources are satisfactory overall, but there are gaps in some subjects. Geography, history, music and physical education have good resources. Resources for science are insufficient for the number of pupils in the school, which limits pupils' access to practical work. Similarly more tools would help work in design and technology and art and design. Library resources and facilities are well above average in terms of quality and quantity.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures to ensure the care, welfare and safety of pupils are **good**. Pupils receive sound advice and support. They are **satisfactorily** canvassed about their views in the development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good common approach to fostering personal and academic success.
- The support given to parents and pupils in transfer arrangements is very good.
- Firm but realistic policies ensure the school is calm and orderly.
- The development of the school council is well established, although more could be done to broaden the ways of seeking pupils' views.

Commentary

29. When children enter the Reception class, there is a highly informative pamphlet that explains the procedures of the school as well as giving parents advice about how they can help their children. This provides a good start to their schooling with parents and teachers having a shared approach to high standards of behaviour, academic achievement and the fostering of self-esteem. The complicated procedures for transfer to a secondary school are carefully and

thoughtfully carried out. During the week of the inspection, pupils had been told which school they were to transfer to and the headteacher interviewed some 25 parents regarding problems with their children's placements, offering both advice and practical solutions. In addition, teachers sensitively dealt with both success and disappointment through open discussions in lessons.

30. The good behaviour of pupils is fostered well by the firm procedures that are in place. There is a shared approach, characterised by the determination of all staff to follow the various policies that have been established. Parents are very pleased with the calm, orderly atmosphere in classes and the way that their children conduct themselves when outside the school environment. Pupils are encouraged to talk openly with other adults about any problems they might have. Older pupils tell their teachers if they notice their friends are upset and in the playground there are more formal systems of 'buddying' for the younger pupils.
31. Increasingly, the school has given specific targets to pupils, not only for their academic achievement, but also for their personal development. Pupils with special educational needs receive more specific advice or are given behavioural programmes to follow. These are monitored carefully by the co-ordinator and by teachers. When necessary, learning support assistants are involved in this process and keep records about what happens in lessons. Academic performance is now monitored well, including the performance of different ethnic groups, as well as by gender, and this has helped inform a more strategic direction to the planning for literacy, numeracy and other subjects. The school council provides a forum for pupils to express their views and to help shape further developments. They have taken an active role in refurbishing parts of the school and in deciding different types of play equipment that will be used. This contrasts with the more teacher-directed approach in lessons, where pupils are not always given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
32. Health and safety issues are taken very seriously and the governors are fully involved in the risk assessments that are conducted on a regular basis. Its success is evident in the way that the school has dealt with the arrangements for an extensive refurbishment to the outside of the building.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **satisfactory** links with parents and carers, **good** links with the community and **very good** links with other schools in the area. Parents think highly of this very popular school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction procedures for children starting school.
- There is some discontent amongst parents about the quality of communication, which has not been resolved.
- Very good links and joint working arrangements have been made with local schools and the technology college.
- There are very good international links that greatly benefit the multicultural and personal development of all pupils.

Commentary

33. Parents at the school are very supportive of their children and are very well motivated to support their learning at home. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association that has an important role in developing home and school relationships as well as bringing resource benefits to the school. The school has generally maintained standards in this area since the last report. Parents are enthusiastic in their support of learning in school and at home, ensuring that reading and other homework is completed fully. At their meeting before the inspection, parents were divided in their views about homework set; the team concluded that overall there is good use of homework to promote and extend learning. Parents also expressed

concern about communication generally between the school and carers, though no clear reasons or weaknesses emerged from these discussions. Parents noted that at the time of the last inspection the school had a weakness in communication about the curriculum and the situation still exists. The headteacher is concerned about parents' views and is determined to discover the causes of their discontent, initially through a questionnaire or survey. The school has not canvassed parents' views in this manner before. Parents hold very positive views about the school's work in all other areas.

34. Information to parents about the school through the prospectus, the governors' annual report, curriculum information and annual reports on pupils' progress is satisfactory. Information to families of children starting in the Reception year is good. Pupils' reports broadly meet requirements but are inconsistent in their content as some lack targets to help pupils to improve.
35. Links with local schools and arrangements to transfer pupils to secondary school are very good. Pupils from secondary schools visit regularly to support clubs and learning activities and make a strong contribution to the life of the school. Both groups of pupils benefit greatly from these arrangements, both personally and academically. Teachers from these schools have also visited to share expertise in curriculum areas, including mathematics and science. West Hill staff work closely with their feeder secondary schools to ensure a smooth and secure transfer for pupils at the end of Year 6. The school also works closely with local pre-school education providers to ensure that youngsters get the best possible start to school life.
36. Student teachers regularly benefit from opportunities for work placement at the school. The school has unusually strong links internationally which greatly enrich pupils' learning and personal development. The main focus of these links has been in developing modern foreign languages such as French, German and Japanese, and the school has welcomed students and teachers from several countries. This is a strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides sound leadership and is supported effectively by an experienced senior management team and a committed governing body. The governing body are well organised and ensure the school meets all statutory requirements. Effective management structures underpin the everyday work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong commitment to inclusion, equality and meeting the needs of individuals.
- The headteacher and governing body are effective in recruiting and retaining teaching staff.
- Strengths and weaknesses in teaching are not monitored regularly enough by some subject co-ordinators and they lack a sharp view about the provision.
- The governing body, bursar and headteacher ensure best value principles are central to the thorough financial management systems that are in place.

Commentary

37. The headteacher has effectively established a school within which staff and governors are committed to the inclusion of all pupils and meeting the needs of individuals. The school has been successful in raising standards of attainment and teaching in many areas, 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 met.
38. The headteacher and governing body have successfully recruited and retained effective teaching staff in an area where difficulties in the recruitment and retention of good quality teaching staff are a barrier to achievement for many schools.

39. The role of subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped. All co-ordinators have produced action plans for their subject but in many cases this has been limited to analysing planning and looking at the work produced by pupils. Unfortunately, there is no ongoing programme in place for the key staff to regularly monitor, evaluate and address strengths and weaknesses in teaching through the school except where co-ordinators are part of the senior management team. Some classroom observations have been undertaken but there are few written records of these. This makes it difficult to ensure a consistent approach or to identify how improvements will link to better methods and organisation within classes.
40. The overall management of the school is good. There are good procedures to ensure the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The office staff and the bursar provide friendly and efficient support. There are satisfactory procedures for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future but, without clear systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, it does not fully inform future plans. The headteacher and governing body work effectively as a team in ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements. The governing body is well organised and some members have particular areas of expertise which are helpful to the school.
41. Members of the governing body take their responsibilities seriously and act from the information they are given about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors visit the school regularly and there is an agreed code of conduct and protocol for these visits. The governors have demonstrated their clear commitment to inclusion through updating and re-modelling the school to ensure access for all pupils, including those with physical difficulties.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	938,238
Total expenditure	943,409
Expenditure per pupil	1,974

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	105,257
Balance carried forward to the next year	100,066

42. The management of the school's finances is good. The headteacher and school bursar meet regularly to ensure that spending is properly planned and that the principles of best value are carried out. The bursar and administrative staff carry out their administrative tasks efficiently and points from the last auditor's report have been acted upon. The school had a large balance to carry forward but the funding has been designated well for appropriate purposes that will ensure the school is financially secure over the longer term. There are some deficiencies of resources in subjects such as science, which need addressing.

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.

Commentary

43. Children are prepared well for transfer into Year 1. The children enter Reception in September before they are five and are split between three classes. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision and the school takes in children from a wide variety of different pre-school providers from the local area. All children achieve well because teaching is good. The curriculum is in line with national requirements and 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 good role models for children and manage them well. Members of staff work well as a team and children's progress is carefully monitored and tracked. The indoor accommodation is good, but outdoor facilities are still limited because of the ongoing development of the outside play-space for the Foundation Stage. At the moment, the children do not have continuous access to this area but outdoor activities are planned and undertaken each day and staff and pupils make the very best of the current limited area and resources. Plans for further development are included in the School Improvement Plan. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

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

Commentary

44. Teaching is consistently good and all children make good progress. Pupils generally come into the school with personal, social and emotional development that is above that expected for children of their age. There are a few children with underdeveloped social skills who find it hard to conform to the high expectations set by staff. These children are well supported by teachers and other adults.

45. The effective teamwork of adults in the three classes provides children with good role models for co-operation and courteous communication. Children are effectively inducted into school and quickly understand the boundaries and expectations of teachers and other staff. The consistent approach of 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 sensibly. Towards the end of an afternoon session, children were given a choice of different activities that they could participate in; they held a democratic vote to decide whether to have "peg-time" in the classroom or go out to play for a few minutes. The choices were clearly explained, the children voted sensibly and the majority decision (to go out to play!) was not disputed.

46. The supportive, friendly approach of staff enables children to establish trusting relationships and succeed in their learning. Children show an interest in their work and are keen to answer teachers' questions or offer ideas and opinions. Children concentrate and behave well, even when not directly supervised by a member of staff. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children share and take turns amicably. They help each other and tidy up effectively. As a result of these effective procedures, attainment is good.

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

47. Most children are on course to exceed the national expectations in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Children make good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk, listen, read and write. Members of staff take every opportunity to develop vocabulary through asking relevant questions and encouraging children to give appropriate responses. For example, linked to the class topic on "Gardens", a group of children were making a "beanstalk" in the outside area where support assistants and teachers chatted to children and asked them questions designed to make them think about and explain what they are doing. Children were also helped to choose words to describe their thoughts and actions.
48. The supportive ethos and good relationships in both classes enable children to have the confidence to talk to each other and to adults. Teachers and support assistants are genuinely interested in what children have to say. Children enjoy stories and listen attentively when they are spoken to. They rapidly acquire knowledge about books and most are starting to use strategies for beginning reading. Some children use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out words from captions and labels around the room.
49. Teachers plan a lesson each day to promote children's learning in this area. Time is well used and teachers hold children's attention by ensuring that topics are colourful, lively and relevant. There are always a variety of challenging, practical activities on offer to hold pupils' attention and develop their communication, language and literacy skills. Children have plenty of opportunities to express themselves through words and pictures. Relevant links with other areas of learning, such as mathematics and art, help children to make connections and talk about their topic when engaged on different tasks.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and a range of relevant activities is planned.
- Mathematical activities are effectively linked to the class topic.

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities, linked to the overall topic, to promote mathematical understanding. Most children are working

at levels expected for their age and are on course to exceed national expectations by the end of the Reception year.

51. Achievement is good. Most children can already count accurately to ten and many do so beyond this number. At the beginning of one mathematics lesson, children clapped and counted accurately to 50. The majority of children can count and match objects to ten and beyond. Almost all children recognise and correctly name two-dimensional shapes, including, squares, circles and triangles. Teachers plan an hour-long mathematics lesson every day. The lessons are well planned and provide a good range of colourful, practical tasks that offer sufficient challenge to build on what children already know and develop their mathematical understanding further. Work is appropriately linked to the topic and provides children with an effective context for linking their learning to real-life situations.
52. Teachers and support staff provide effective support for small groups of children during practical mathematical activities. Sensitive, skilful questioning by adults enables children to talk about numbers, shapes and colours, thereby 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

- Planning is good and the range of methods ensures children learn well.
- Staff use questions particularly effectively to enhance children's knowledge.

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels expected for their age and are on course to exceed the national expectations by the end of Reception Year. A good variety of appropriate activities are planned to stimulate children's curiosity and support their understanding. One class was undertaking a topic on "Gardens", and an other on "Animals", during the inspection. A good range of activities related to the topics was planned and delivered in both classes. Teachers and other adults questioned the children sensitively and encouraged them to listen and think carefully when talking about the topic. Helpful topic information is provided for parents each half term and parents are very supportive in taking children to visit relevant places of interest, such as garden centres, during the school holidays. Reception classes have computers that children use regularly and bright displays that effectively support children's learning and help to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make the most of the limited outdoor area.
- When outside, pupils behave in a mature, sensible and responsible way.

Commentary

54. Children were observed in the outside playground but not in indoor activities and indications are that most children are in line to exceed the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

55. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff make the most of the limited outdoor area and activities are carefully planned each day to support physical development, providing opportunities to practise skills such as throwing, catching, balancing and riding wheeled vehicles. When outdoors, children behave in a mature and sensible way and stay well within their designated area. Children are pleasant, courteous and focused when playing together. Children play co-operatively, showing consideration for each other and sharing equipment well.
56. A sound range of activities is provided outdoors each day. Any minor bumps are dealt with quickly and calmly by support staff, who rapidly comfort and reassure any child who has been hurt or upset.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning in this area is good and effectively supports children's learning.
- Support staff provide a high level of support and encouragement for children, including children with special educational needs.

Commentary

57. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. A wide range of activities is planned that provide children with opportunities to develop skills in cutting, sticking, painting, drawing and making three-dimensional models.
58. During the inspection, the creative activities were linked to the topics on "Gardens" or "Pets". Children had the opportunity to paint, stencil, draw, cut out and make flowers for the class "Garden Centre". Support staff actively participate in activities with children and sensitively question, encourage and guide them to improve their creative skills.
59. Children display a high level of skill during these activities and most are in line to exceed the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Behaviour and relationships are excellent and children concentrate for extended periods of time, co-operating well with each other and sharing equipment and resources in a good natured, mature way.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good in the infants; but in the juniors, writing standards, especially those of boys could be higher.
- The National Literacy Strategy has been followed closely but, until recently, has resulted in limiting the use of extended writing.
- Teaching is good in the majority of lessons at Years 1 and 2.
- Provision for special educational needs is good overall and, in the infant classes, it is very good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of children are good and, in some lessons, they are very good.

Commentary

60. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2. By Year 6, they are average but stronger in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Standards have risen slightly overall since the last inspection but there has been a marked contrast in the trends over time between infants and juniors. Since 2001 standards have been steadily rising by the end of Year 2 as a result of stronger achievement in reading and writing by girls, whereas they have steadily fallen by the end of Year 6 because of a decline in the achievement of boys. In the 2003 Year 6 national tests, there were differences from the national pattern at level 5 for boys. While almost 50 per cent of boys achieved Level 4 in writing, only six per cent achieved Level 5. The corresponding figures for girls were above the national pattern being 76 per cent at level 4 and 24 per cent at level 5.
61. Achievement in speaking and listening is good and pupils have the opportunity to develop these skills in many lessons. Teachers place emphasis on giving opportunities to explain, describe, discuss and question. Most pupils enter school with at least average skill levels but teachers have identified an increase in speech and language disorders. Children needing support are quickly identified and the majority of pupils make good progress through the infants. Higher and average attaining pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, as do lower attaining pupils, especially when supported by an adult. In the juniors, good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided. Over-direction from some teachers and the lack of stimulus from lesson content does not always encourage and stimulate high level of discussion. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar levels of progress to others in the school.
62. Achievement in reading is satisfactory overall but the standards achieved by more able readers are not as high as might be expected. Children progress through the levels of the school's carefully structured reading scheme until they reach the end level when they are free to choose their own material. Teachers monitor this, ensuring that progress continues. Classroom assistants successfully help the least able to make sense of words and texts. Many older children bring books from home because they enjoy reading. Reading diaries provide a good link between home and school. Older children have good reference and library skills as a result of regular visits to the well-resourced library. Children respond to literature best when the teaching is above average. In a Year 2 lesson an assembly story about a tiger and a mouse came alive for the children because of the animated way in which the text was interpreted.
63. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. Despite the good start given by teachers in Key Stage 1, standards fall away by the end of Year 6. Fewer opportunities are given for older children to develop extended writing, although it is evident from some of the topic exercises completed at home that they are capable of doing so. The school has identified that more needs to be done to develop purposeful writing linked to other subjects, using ideas and themes which appeal to boys. In addition, writing is sometimes over-directed with little opportunity for independent work, for example, in Year 6 science lessons. Standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are average by Year 6 and there are a number of examples where work is restricted to short pieces completed in lessons. Year 2 children show good progress that has developed from a list of events at the start of the year to more extended pieces with increased detail and stronger purpose by the time of inspection, with openings such as... *'Once upon a time there was a monkey. He was a very naughty monkey'*. Word processing was used in Year 2, to improve dragon poems at the time of the Chinese New Year. Computers were used in some lessons in support of literacy but are not used as an intrinsic tool other than through work in the computer suite. Handwriting is taught systematically throughout the school, but the skills learnt are not always transferred to other work.
64. There have been improvements in teachers' planning since the last inspection. In the juniors, planning is thorough and detailed but too strongly adheres to the National Literacy Strategy coverage without taking enough account of all pupils' ability. In contrast, the support for pupils with special educational needs is good with well targeted and continuously planned activities

that are revised in the light of improvement. As a result, teaching and learning are good in the infants but no more than satisfactory in junior classes.

65. In Years 1 and 2, most lessons have a strong pace with good interaction between teacher and pupils. Chosen texts are lively and capture pupils' interest. Group work is well suited to different abilities and appropriately pitched. Pupils work well together and receive good support from classroom assistants. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who respond well to their prompting. Classrooms are stimulating, attractive and well resourced but some are small. The adult support for pupils in the middle ability range is less in evidence, although the planned activities are matched to their need and every effort is made to include them. Most lessons are sound but sometimes lack innovative and stimulating teaching, which especially limits the development of writing. Nevertheless, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good throughout. An exception was in a Year 5 lesson where the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece captured the imagination of pupils in writing a new adventure for Jason.
66. Leadership by the co-ordinator is satisfactory. He has successfully led the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and improvements in planning, and has monitored some teaching. He has supported well-established teachers who have found the changes difficult to assimilate. Assessment is improved in identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses but not as yet to improve lesson plans. The reasons for the recent fall in standards have been identified and the co-ordinator has ideas on how to improve the provision. There is, however, a lack of clear and specific outcomes in the development plan. Various booster classes have been used to improve standards. These are presently being reviewed as they are not having the impact that the school would like. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been sound.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Homework on topics and projects shows good levels of literacy and computer skills, which are not always mirrored by the work in lessons. Speaking and listening skills offer a good contribution to other subjects, such as in class discussions in history, science and mathematics.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in Japanese, French and German is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are very positive.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and imaginative.
- The leadership of the co-ordinator is good.
- Parents strongly approve of the lessons.
- Achievement is high.

Commentary

68. This year, pupils are studying Japanese in Years 1 and 2, French in Years 3 and 4 and German in Years 5 and 6, but other languages are also given consideration at various times. Standards are as expected at this introductory stage in speaking and listening, responding, reading and writing. Achievement is high due to the levels of interest and motivation that teachers create through the good planning. In a very good Year 3 French lesson, children could give single words or short phrases to describe what they saw or heard and were able to understand simple classroom instructions or questions. Children make rapid gains in learning in a very short time.

69. Children at Year 2 were able to count confidently in Japanese and introduce themselves. Year 3 children's response to a lesson on the French words for relatives was very good. Year 6 children could clearly explain what they had learnt over time and were able to introduce themselves confidently in German. From the limited evidence gathered, the lessons are having a positive impact on children's understanding of languages as well as their self-esteem and self-confidence. All the children enjoyed the activity.
70. Teachers have many very good ideas for active, imaginative lessons and resources are of good quality. The benefits from the leadership they receive from the co-ordinator and the involvement of teachers from a neighbouring language college have provided a big boost for teachers' and children's confidence. Parents rightly approve strongly of the scheme, particularly with regard to the good start they make on transfer to Year 7.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is generally taught well with particular strengths in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Learning support assistants provide effective support in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in mathematics lessons are very good.
- Work is not always matched to pupils' needs.
- There is a strong emphasis on number but a lack of practical problem solving.
- The subject co-ordinator knows the strengths and weaknesses but the leadership role is nevertheless underdeveloped because this is not linked to a thorough understanding about the quality of teaching in classes.

Commentary

71. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, pupils attained very highly in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in comparison with the national average for pupils of that age. Good teaching has resulted in a good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Pupils at the end of Year 2 also attain levels that are above the national average for pupils of their age. Pupils in Year 2 are attaining well, for example, partitioning numbers to 20, calculating with standard units of time, estimating lengths using standard measures and identifying and naming properties of two-dimensional shapes. In Year 6, pupils have learned to calculate the area of shapes, including triangles, solve problems using ratios and identify all the axes of symmetry of quadrilaterals.
72. Pupils achieve well at both key stages and are attaining above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In these years in particular, they are consistently challenged by their teachers' well-focused questions. The good support of learning support assistants complements teaching and enables pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, as well as those in the middle ability range, to benefit from the main teaching in lessons. Pupils listen attentively in lessons, settle quickly and diligently to their tasks and produce a substantial amount of written work, which is generally well presented, but is inconsistent across the school.
73. Teachers receive regular training linked to the National Numeracy Strategy and outcomes of training are generally implemented in lessons to enable pupils to attain higher levels. Approaches to marking and assessment are inconsistent but where they are good, they are characterised by accurate and sensitive comments that reward pupils' successes and provide high quality guidance on how they can improve. Pupils are regularly tested, and their progress tracked and recorded by teachers. Work is not always closely matched to individual pupils' needs. There is a strong emphasis on number work across all year groups but pupils do not

have enough opportunity to undertake practical problem-solving activities or investigations. This is a priority in the School Improvement Plan.

Example of outstanding practice

A mathematics lesson in Year 6 that demonstrates how well all levels of ability can be challenged.

Pupils listened with keen interest as the teacher recapped the previous lesson on “*calculating the area of simple shapes and shapes that can be split into rectangles*”. The teacher demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the subject and a thorough understanding of each pupil and the problems they had previously encountered. In a very understated and business-like manner, a group of four very high attaining pupils got straight on with their more challenging work as they did not need to listen to the recap being given to pupils who had had problems with the work in the last lesson. The teacher used assessments of the previous day’s work to inform the planning, structure the lesson and finely differentiate work, ensuring all pupils were working at a pace and level appropriate to their attainment and needs. The pace of the lesson was swift, relationships were excellent. Behaviour, attitudes and relationships were exemplary. Pupils listened attentively, offered relevant ideas, suggestions and answers at appropriate times. They settled quickly to their tasks, shared equipment well and took an obvious pride in what they were achieving. This excellent lesson was characterised by high expectations, mature relationships and clearly focused teaching and learning of the highest order.

74. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinator who teaches in Year 2. There is a shadow co-ordinator in the juniors. This makes for an effective team, with a potential over-view of the whole school. However, the role of the subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped, and subject development is restricted, because the co-ordinator does not have time to monitor and evaluate strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Despite this, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Pupils use mathematics well in some other subjects and develop their appreciation of the practical uses of these skills in science, geography and art and design. However, the systematic planning of such opportunities is underdeveloped, except in information and communication technology, where good opportunities are offered.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests for Year 6 are improving and are above the national trend.
- Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations because standards of experimental and investigative science are not used well enough to develop deeper understanding.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory overall as a result of the satisfactory teaching.
- Variation in the teaching time means that there are also variations in the amount of work covered by pupils.
- Juniors have insufficient opportunities for independent learning.
- Resources are inadequate.

Commentary

76. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were high when compared to schools nationally but the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was below average. It was well below average when compared to similar schools. Overall, there has been an upward trend in standards in national tests for Year 6 pupils over the last few years. Standards in 2003 for Year 6 pupils were well above average when compared to schools nationally and above average

compared to pupils with similar prior attainment. However, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was only average when compared to their prior attainment because at this level they needed to use their knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

77. In the current Year 2 and Year 6, standards are lower than in the 2003 national tests, because there are differences in the prior attainment of the pupils. Standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6, but pupils' experimental and investigative skills are weaker. Year 2 pupils identify pushes and pulls in everyday movements. They collect data from their observations and construct graphs. Year 6 pupils measure their pulse rate before and after exercise, relating this to knowledge from games lessons. They know elements of a fair test but need prompting when carrying out their own investigations. This is because they have insufficient opportunities to plan their own experimental work; this is especially true of older juniors. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Boys and girls achieve equally in lessons.
78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils' learning and achievement are good. Teachers plan well as teams, securing consistency of coverage of the curriculum, but activities are not always matched to the differing levels of attainment in the class. Learning objectives for each lesson are made clear to pupils, ensuring that they know what they are going to learn. Activities are well organised and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, ensuring time is used appropriately in practical sessions. Teachers question pupils well to extend learning; however, in the juniors, there is an over-emphasis on exposition and teachers direct pupils too much in the recording of their work. At the end of lessons, a purposeful discussion consolidates the learning. In the good lessons, teachers adjust the team plan to match the prior attainment of pupils in their class, thereby offering challenge to pupils of differing abilities. In addition, teaching methods and resources interest, motivate and fully engage pupils; they record their work independently, and achieve well in all aspects of science.
79. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but there are inconsistencies. Weekly plans are not always adapted to reflect pupils' performance. A good element of assessment is the way teachers assess pupils against key objectives at the end of each unit of work. However, there is insufficient analysis of performance to track progress of pupils or groups throughout their time in the school. Marking is consistently good in Year 6, with comments confirming what pupils know and suggesting ways to improve.
80. The curriculum secures a balance between the different strands and allows for mixed age classes. There are variations in the teaching time, meaning some pupils cover less work and progress is variable. Visits and events add interest, including those to and from the local secondary schools, for example, at a 'Bug Show.' Resources are insufficient to provide regular access to individual hands-on practical work.
81. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The subject leaders have undertaken improvements, including purchasing a published scheme to support planning, the provision of infant resource boxes and building investigations into the scheme of work. Test papers have been analysed to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, science has not been a school priority recently and subject leaders have not had opportunities to track the impact of initiatives on the quality of teaching and ensure the curriculum is consistently applied.
82. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection where there have been considerable improvements in the results of national tests.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good standards are achieved.
- Good teaching and learning are linked to careful planning and organisation following an intensive training programme.
- The continuing improvements being made to use ICT within all areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

83. Standards are above those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a result of the intense training programme that has taken place over the last two years. The subject was highlighted in the School Improvement Plan and thorough procedures were put in place to ensure all teachers had the necessary skills and confidence through training provided through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). This is benefiting all pupils as the quality of learning has improved across year groups. Older pupils are now making much more rapid progress than at the time of the last inspection.
84. All strands of the curriculum are covered in depth and teachers are able to place the use of ICT in the context of other subjects, such as science and mathematics. Work includes the use of spreadsheets, research using the Internet and reflects the good quality of hardware that has been installed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have collected data by tallying information for themselves and then transferring this onto graphs. Their literacy skills have meant that they have few problems putting titles onto the charts and they show good ability using the keyboard. They can open and close programs, save their information and are confident when asked to complete work on their own. They talk confidently about other software that they have used and can describe the sort of programs they would need in different situations.
85. Through the juniors, these early skills are built upon. Planning is linked well to improving both the specific skills of the subject and links to real life situations. In an art lesson in Year 5/6, for instance, the teacher used printed pictures to enhance the understanding of portraiture. In Year 3/4, the class have been learning about the use of databases. They have been learning about how information can be stored and analysed more quickly and will move onto using this in work connected with other subjects. The teacher identified this as a matter of course within her own planning, showing how well the training programme has helped build confidence in using ICT as a tool for learning. Homework is often of a very good standard, demonstrating that there is very good support at home and that many pupils are capable of high standards.
86. Teaching and learning are good. An overall long term curriculum plan provides a good basis upon which to connect different aspects of the subject and ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not miss any important work as they move through the school. Teachers work in the classrooms and in the computer suite. This room is small, particularly for older pupils and so small groups are sometimes taken back into the classroom to work on similar tasks with a learning support assistant. During lessons, the pupils show good levels of concentration, work sensibly on their own or in pairs and willingly help each other if they find difficulties. The use of assessment is still at an early stage of development. In some classes, the teachers have already developed assessment tasks or skills sheets to help them plan more effectively for all levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well both by adults but also by their peers. Teachers use a good range of different methods to organise their lessons. The use of questioning is a particular strength. For instance, in the lesson on databases the teacher asked about how useful these would be. Pupils gave their opinions showing a good level of thought, saying that *“they can store lots of information because they have a bigger memory.”*

87. Two co-ordinators, one of whom has started shadowing the other, have a suitable overview. When the first computer suite was built the co-ordinator, in consultation with other staff, was fully consulted on its design and was able to influence the decisions that were made. The development of the second suite has similarly been made with whole staff discussion and the bursar also undertook a comprehensive questionnaire about its use. Unfortunately, the co-ordinators have little time to see what is happening in other classes. The school is very aware that the ratio of computers should be higher by the end of this academic year and the plans in place will ensure that the national average ratio of computers to pupils will be reached within a realistic timescale.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

88. There is now good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Teachers work hard to ensure that work is linked well and has realism. There are examples of the use of technology in most subjects, especially science, geography, history and English. The difficulties in using computers in the classroom have been overcome by timetabling the computer suite more regularly and by the recent initiative of developing a further suite. The use of computers is good in the Foundation Stage to help work in mathematics and literacy. The very comprehensive word processing that takes place at home indicates that pupils are increasingly aware of how their work in ICT supports all other work at school.

HUMANITIES

89. During the inspection, only a few lessons were seen in geography and history and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the standards in these subjects. However, from an analysis of these lessons, as well as a scrutiny of the work completed and discussions with pupils, it is clear that provision for both subjects is good and standards are above those expected nationally.
90. In **geography**, younger pupils in the infants build upon the good work that is taking place in the Reception class and are gaining much knowledge about their own local environment as well as the wider world. They know how to draw maps, such as those of their classroom. They know that a key is important although these are not as evident as they do not always include them in the diagrams they have drawn. The younger junior pupils have been studying Tanzania, which links well to the culture and traditions of a different continent. There are also some good links to religious beliefs from their work on birthday parties in other countries. They have made comparisons between life in Benin and Britain and by sequencing events have made links with their work in literacy. Much of the work is above that which is expected for their age, particularly in the case of those with average and above average attainment.
91. By Years 5 and 6, the study of Dartford is bringing together all the skills learnt earlier and pupils are beginning to understand the specific vocabulary that is used in the subject as well as how geography and history link together. In their work on India there is another good example of comparative study looking at different climates as well as how it affects village life in India.
92. The school places a high emphasis on its international connections and these all aid pupils' understanding about different regions of the world, the cultures, traditions and physical environment changes. Planning is thorough and a wide range of resources is used to stimulate and interest the pupils. The subject has continued to develop well since the last inspection.
93. In **history**, there is a similarly high level of thoroughness in planning relevant and exciting experiences. Younger pupils are given the opportunity to think about time sequences, linking this to their parents' and grandparents' childhood. An interesting survey has helped develop this further. By Year 6, pupils' study of the Tudors has included specific historic detail about Henry VIII, his wives and his life. However, good challenge is presented to the pupils by asking them to give their own thoughts and judgements about the reasons for his decisions. Statements such as *'I think Henry was a successful king'* have been followed up by the

teacher asking “Why?” As in geography much of the work is at a level higher than that expected for their age.

94. Teachers and pupils expectations about the usefulness of homework are high. A good example of the success of this is in the very comprehensive, well-presented studies that have been made into books and pamphlets. Much of this work has been word-processed. It shows the pupils have thought carefully about what they have found out through Internet research as well as by using written material. The teachers have valued the work but have made useful comments about making sure that work is not just copied. Higher attaining pupils have thought about carefully selecting from what they have found out and rejected any information that is not directly connected with the work they are studying.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sound lesson planning and teaching results in satisfactory standards of work.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Opportunities for pupils to talk about and explore the religious concepts being taught in more depth and detail are not always taken.

Commentary

95. Pupils’ attainment is in line with that outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In discussion, pupils were happy to talk about their learning and they could remember things they have learned about Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Pupils’ achievement is sound throughout the school. The curriculum is weighted towards learning about Christianity but pupils learn about other world religions, although these are not taught to the same depth. Work follows the locally agreed syllabus.
96. Teaching and learning over time are satisfactory and, in the two lessons seen, were good. Detailed planning enables teachers to teach well and pupils to achieve satisfactory standards of work. In one lesson when the teacher made real-life links to her own experience of getting married and keeping her wedding photographs in a “special book”, pupils could relate to this and were confident and secure to talk about their own experiences and feelings. Pupils’ behaviour and attitudes in lessons are very good but teachers do not always open up opportunities for pupils to discuss the concepts being taught in more detail and allow pupils to draw parallels with their own lives. The subject satisfactorily supports the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
97. The subject is soundly led and managed and there has been sound improvement since the last inspection. There is no regular or systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, or the curriculum, to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

98. These subjects were not a main focus for the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a firm judgement on standards and the quality of teaching and learning overall. Parts of four lessons were observed in art and design, music and physical education. A selection of pupils’ work was analysed in art and design and design and technology, and inspectors listened to pupils singing in assembly and choir. Discussions took place with the art and design and music subject leaders, and informally with the physical education leader.
99. In the work seen, standards in **art and design** are in line with national expectations throughout the school. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Drawing skills are generally well developed, but

painting skills are weak and opportunities for three-dimensional work are limited overall. Sketchbooks are relatively new and their use requires development. There are examples of good work in the infants. For example, work on spiders was developed through detailed drawings and sculpture. Indications are that teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good.

100. Standards in **design and technology** are in line with national expectations, but finishing techniques are unsatisfactory. For example, Year 6 pupils have designed and made musical instruments, demonstrating appropriate use of tools and materials. Some work shows a good standard of finish, but some of it is variable. The use of technology books to show progression in the full design and make process requires development. Achievement is satisfactory overall. From the work samples seen, teaching is satisfactory.
101. Both art and design, and design and technology, make good links with other subjects. For example in the junior art lesson seen, pupils drew portraits to support their study of the Tudors, and 'Tudor' hat designs are planned for design and technology. There are significant variations in teaching time for these two subjects, which has a negative impact on the development of skills and the raising of standards. The subject leaders have provided useful schemes of work to support planning and have begun to collect samples of pupils' work to support assessment. These require further development. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are some gaps. For example, more basic tools are needed to ensure practical work in design and technology. Formal improvement plans are not yet in place for art and design but appropriate action has been identified through the subject improvement plan in the case of design and technology, including the need to review the teaching time. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.
102. In the **music** lesson seen, Reception and Year 1 pupils enjoyed singing, clapping and marching to the beat and playing simple percussion instruments. They demonstrated standards in line with national expectations. Achievement was satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. In assembly and choir, the standard of singing is good. Pupils perform well-known hymns and songs with good control, pitch and tone. They can sustain their parts when singing rounds. Music is well resourced and has the benefit of a dedicated room. School productions, choir and involvement in local festivals enrich the curriculum satisfactorily. Pupils recently enjoyed a successful Indian drum and dance project supported by the Mick Jagger Arts Centre in Year 5 and 6. Unfortunately, audiences were limited. A wide range of instrument tuition is available to junior pupils; however, relatively little is free. The subject leader has provided a supportive scheme of work, which is supplemented by a published scheme. The provision of an assessment sheet is a recent development and has yet to impact on standards. The leader has not had recent opportunities to monitor teaching and identify areas for improvement.
103. In the two parts of lessons seen in **physical education**, pupils demonstrated skills in line with those expected for their age. Younger pupils showed appropriate control when performing rolls in gymnastics. They evaluated each other's performance and knew about the effect of exercise on their bodies. Older pupils controlled the ball and could aim satisfactorily in a netball skills lesson. Teaching in these lessons was satisfactory. There is an emphasis on swimming and for the last few years, all Year 6 pupils have been able to swim 25 metres. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons. The subject leader has provided a detailed scheme of work, good resources and training to improve the quality of teaching. Assessment is satisfactory and is made against key objectives for each unit. However, there has been limited monitoring of the impact of these initiatives. Whilst the school does not have its own field, good use is made of the two halls, a local secondary school field and pool. A good range of well-attended seasonal clubs, including football, netball, and short tennis, enhance the curriculum and the school enjoys considerable success in competitive sports.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

104. This area was not a major focus of the inspection, no lessons were observed and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning

overall. Nevertheless, it is clear that pupils achieve well overall because their attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are respectful of others and have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school's very high expectations of pupils' conduct and the promotion of racial harmony enhance these strengths. The school council and day-to-day responsibilities offered to all pupils make a positive contribution. However, the implementation of the new scheme of work lacks rigour. There is no clear expectation of time to be spent or when units are to be studied. Consequently, some classes do not have personal, social and health education sessions on a regular basis. The subject leader does not have time allocated to monitor the impact of the scheme of work nor to observe teaching.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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