

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAUHERNE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Canterbury, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118569

Acting Headteacher: Mr C. Close

Lead inspector: Mr G.R. Logan

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 October 2004

Inspection number: 266389

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	112
School address:	City View Franklyn Road Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT2 8PT
Telephone number:	01227 462883
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Janet Larkinson
Date of previous inspection:	05/12/2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Beauherne Community Primary School in Canterbury serves an area which consists predominantly of local authority or privately-rented accommodation and has many features of socio-economic disadvantage. There has been a progressive decline in the number of families with young children in the area, and a corresponding increase in the elderly and in the number of properties rented to the growing student population. Partly as a result of this, the numbers on roll - currently 112 - have been in steady decline. Almost all pupils are from White European backgrounds, with around two per cent of pupils of mixed-race or other family background. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A well above average proportion of pupils (45 per cent) have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements. These figures have reduced significantly from the previous school year. The school has experienced relatively high levels of mobility, with around 30 per cent change of pupils each year. In some year groups recently, few pupils had been in the school for the full period of their primary education. Currently, more pupils are joining the school than are leaving. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, 34 per cent, is well above the national average. When they enter the school, children in almost all year groups have very restricted social and language skills. However, the current Reception intake has a much better profile than this. A high proportion of pupils who join the school in later years have special educational needs. There is a voluntary sector pre-school on the premises and crèche facilities are due to open soon. The school shares an extensive site with Canterbury High School and the East Kent Hospital School Service. Plans are well-advanced for the

establishment of a Federation of schools, including Beauherne, which aims to provide an enhanced range of social, welfare and educational services for children and the community. This scheme is due to be established by April 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G. R. Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics Physical education The Foundation Stage
9163	Mr G.V. Humphrey	Lay inspector	
22778	Mrs A. Shannon	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education English as an additional language
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education, though it is not yet as effective as it could be. It provides very well for children in Reception, offers a good range of opportunities and has a very supportive ethos. Pupils' achievement has been weak, but the school is now well-placed for further improvement. Although satisfactory at the time of the inspection, value for money over the last year has been unsatisfactory because of the very high levels of funding.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the acting headteacher and senior staff is good.
- Provision in the Reception class is very good and children are achieving well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The climate for learning is much improved.
- Teaching and learning are now good; as a result, pupils' achievement has improved.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good; child protection arrangements are excellent.
- The links with the community and with other schools are very good.
- Standards are well below average and need to be raised further; achievement in lessons is now satisfactory but until recently pupils have not made sufficient progress over time.
- In spite of the school's best efforts, a few parents do not send their children to school regularly.

Since it was inspected five terms ago, the school has attracted its own permanent staff and the overall quality of teaching at present is at least as good as in 2002. Assessment structures have improved and is increasingly effective. There are now very few exclusions; attitudes and behaviour are now good. Considerable work has gone into adapting the curriculum to match more closely pupils' learning needs. Foundation Stage provision has continued to improve, is now a strength and children there achieve well. Care of pupils and the range of support services available to pupils and families are high quality. Links between the school and its secondary partner are now very good. There has been considerable enhancement of the premises and school resources. The new management team is very focused on raising standards. In many respects the school has made good progress – a view strongly shared by its local authority. However, though some evidence of recovery is apparent, neither standards nor achievement over time are yet as good, or consistent, as they should be. With the complex history of the school and the challenges facing many of its pupils, the impact of the school's efforts will take more time to show through in significantly improved standards. Given the relatively short timescale under review, the considerable amount which has been achieved and which directly benefits pupils, and the many barriers to learning which exist here, overall improvement has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E*	E	E*	D
Mathematics	E	E*	E	C
Science	E	E	E*	E

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

It is no surprise that pupils' achievement has, over time, been unsatisfactory, as a result of the lack of continuity in teaching, very high levels of teacher and pupil mobility and serious behaviour issues. However, achievement in all lessons seen, and in pupils' current work, was at least **satisfactory**, with good achievement in most lessons in Reception. The improving situation is underpinned by the appointment of committed permanent staff with high expectations and a rigorous approach, better assessment and planning procedures and pupils' improved attitudes and behaviour. Reception provision is very good. Most children in Reception are likely to reach the goals set for them by the end of the year. Very good links with the pre-school group mean that current Reception children are much further advanced than has usually been the case. Standards elsewhere reflect the spasmodic provision and unsatisfactory teaching which were endemic in previous years, and the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Many older pupils have significant deficits in their learning and it will take time for the benefits of recent initiatives to show through. Standards in Year 2 at present are below average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 are well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly, though still unsatisfactory overall. Standards in physical education are similar to those normally found. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Behaviour is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Relationships between pupils are very good. Although exceeding LEA targets, attendance is below the national average; punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Although the quality of teaching was a significant concern in the past, teaching is now **good**, with some very good practice in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Expectations have risen; achievement in the lessons seen was never less than satisfactory. Younger pupils in particular are well-motivated and keen to learn. Relationships are very good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school analyses pupil performance data effectively to support the raising of standards. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support staff are effectively deployed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning and welfare. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular provision. Accommodation is good. Pupils receive very good care and support. Very good induction procedures help new children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are excellent. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and very good links with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership and is strongly supported by his deputy. He has built a cohesive and increasingly effective team and is very focused on the raising of standards in the school. Current staff are very committed. Some subject co-ordinators are relatively new to their responsibilities. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness, governors' management of the school and financial management are all satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. School administration is efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents feel that the school has improved and is now providing well for their children. They feel that teaching is better, that their children are expected to work hard, that they are treated fairly and are making good progress and that induction arrangements are good. Not all parents feel that behaviour is as good as it should be. Some feel that parents' views should be sought more actively and that they need more guidance as to how they might help their children. A high proportion of those responding felt that the school is now well-led and managed. Most pupils enjoy school, attend willingly, participate readily in the activities provided and appreciate the high quality care shown to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science, and increase the rate of progress pupils make as they move through the school.
- Improve the quality of marking, so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Continue efforts to ensure that parents realize the importance of sending their children to school regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards are **well below average** in English, mathematics and science, but this is primarily a reflection of an extended period of disrupted learning. However, pupils' achievement is now **satisfactory** as a result of the many changes made in the school and the benefits of this are beginning to show through.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in Reception are achieving well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Achievement in lessons is good, promoted well by more rigorous teaching, better planning and assessment and the adjustments made to the curriculum.
- Standards remain too low in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

1. For almost all year groups in the school, attainment on entry has been low. The one exception is the current Reception group which has benefited significantly from the recently enhanced provision in the pre-school group which almost all children attend. There is now consistency and continuity of practice and expectation between the pre-school group and the Reception class. Children now in Reception entered school with significantly further advanced skills than was the case in the past. There are now improvements in children's previously weak language (particularly speaking) skills and their personal and social skills.
2. Low attainment on entry has been exacerbated by very high levels of pupil mobility and the overall loss of numbers, particularly during the very lengthy period when the school was subject to Special Measures. Where pupils have joined the school, they have, more often than not, had significant levels of special educational need. The residual effects of these patterns of intake and movement are still very evident in the school and are only slowly moving through the system. Around two-thirds of pupils were recorded as having special educational need towards the end of the last school year. At present, 45 per cent of pupils are on the register. This is a very high figure, with significant peaks in certain year groups. Equally there are very few pupils identified as being in the higher ability bands. There are very few pupils who come from minority ethnic groups; none at present has English as an additional language.
3. Another factor which has had a fundamental and deeply negative effect on pupils' achievement has been the extremely high turnover of staff. Although the school now has, for the first time in many years, a permanent and committed staff, appointed by the school, who have chosen to work there, this was not the case for a considerable period of time. Many of the older pupils have experienced exceptionally high levels of staff mobility. For example, both the last and the current Year 6 cohorts have had upwards of twenty 'permanent' teachers in Years 3 to 6 alone, interspersed by extended periods of daily supply staff.

4. It is no surprise that pupils' achievement over time has been unsatisfactory, or that standards are lower than they should be. Only now, given pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, improved procedures for planning and assessment, committed and effective permanent staff and a leadership team which is focused on standards, are the structures in place to enable the school to begin to push standards up.
5. When the school was inspected five terms ago, teaching had improved significantly because proven staff from elsewhere had been drafted into the school two terms previously. Standards generally were unsatisfactory and were the key point for improvement. Although there was a marginal improvement in the results in Year 6 in the following summer (2003), this was less marked in Year 2. Standards in 2004 were low across the school. The oldest pupils at that time, together with the previous and the current Year 6 groups, have been the cohorts who had almost all of their education in the school during the period of greatest turbulence. There is no doubt that their education has been significantly affected by these experiences. For too many of those children, achievement was unsatisfactory. Of the Year 6 pupils who left in 2004, almost half had entered since Year 3, one fifth in Year 6 alone. Three-fifths of the group had identified special educational needs. Of the Year 6 leavers in 2003, 60 per cent had not been in the school in Year 4.
6. The current picture is a more promising one. Pupils are now achieving well in three-fifths of the lessons observed. No unsatisfactory achievement was seen in lessons and this more positive picture is reflected in the recorded work seen from the current year. Achievement is better overall for the younger than the older pupils, with the Foundation Stage pupils achieving particularly well. However, there are still significant residual issues which compromise the school's efforts to move standards forward more quickly. Current Year 6 pupils are likely to meet their targets in literacy and numeracy, particularly as significant targeted intervention is already planned. The current Year 5 shows considerable promise in mathematics and pupils are likely to achieve very well in 2006. However, the current Year 3 has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and their overall attainment remains low, as indicated in the 2004 test results.
7. The improving situation is underpinned by a current leadership team which is sharply focused on raising standards, the appointment and retention of some able teachers who are committed to the school; more effective assessment arrangements, improved planning and modifications to the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and the significant improvement in the climate for learning, with pupils' attitudes and behaviour now being good. Boys in particular engage with their learning to a greater extent than was reported in the past.
8. Provision for special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving at least satisfactorily at present, with the effective deployment of well-prepared learning support staff. These pupils are well supported in class and make steady progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Lack of parental support, however, reduces the progress they might make.
9. The school identifies pupils considered to be gifted or talented; however, there are very few children currently in the school who are working at this level.

Foundation Stage

10. Foundation Stage provision is very good. Children benefit from very good induction procedures and settle well into school routines. Very good teaching, planning and assessment procedures ensure that children make good progress and achieve well. The majority of children in the current group are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas, with a number exceeding them. This is a much more positive profile than has been the case in any other cohort in recent years and reflects, to a significant extent, the good preparation received in the pre-school provision. Children's speaking skills are a weaker feature, but provision in personal, social and emotional development, in mathematical development and in physical and creative development is very good. By the end of Reception, children are likely to be well-prepared for the work in the main school.

Years 1 and 2

11. Standards by the end of Year 2 in 2004 are below average in writing, well below average in reading, mathematics and science, but average in information and communication technology. Standards are similar to those normally found in physical education. Underlying literacy skills are not used as effectively as they could be in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' achievement in all areas is satisfactory at present as a result of the focused teaching they are receiving.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	12.1 (13.8)	16.0 (15.7)
Writing	11.0 (13.0)	14.9 (14.6)
Mathematics	12.4 (15.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Years 3 – 6

12. Currently, attainment in Year 6 is well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are average in physical education. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly, now that the ICT suite has become available, but remain below average. No lessons in religious education were taught during the inspection. Although this has by no means been the case in the past, pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily. This is partly the result of the changes to the curriculum to provide learning opportunities more suited to the needs of these pupils. The school achieved its targets in mathematics in 2004, but not in English.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.9 (24.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Mathematics	22.8 (23.3)	27.2 (26.8)
Science	22.9 (25.6)	28.9 (28.6)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

13. Pupils' literacy skills are not promoted sufficiently across the curriculum, although there are some opportunities to record, write and communicate in subjects such as history and science. Numeracy skills are satisfactory. Pupils' skills in ICT are improving, with well-planned, cross-curricular use of ICT, such as sessions which effectively support learning in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave well, have **good** attitudes towards their learning and find the work they are given interesting and stimulating. Their behaviour is **good**. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** and below the national average but punctuality for those who attend regularly is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes and commitment towards their work.
- Relationships and racial harmony in the school are very good.
- Pupils readily take responsibility and contribute to the work of the school.
- The school successfully promotes the moral and social development of pupils.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

14. Pupils show good levels of interest in their work and all other school activities. The quality of teaching has a major influence on behaviour in the classroom. The style of teaching is very well matched to pupils' learning needs and encourages them to sustain high levels of interest and concentration. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities around the school. Leadership skills are developed through the many opportunities for team sports, school councillors exercise a significant influence on the work and environment of the school and school prefects are briefed to help support younger pupils and contribute towards the smooth running of the organisation.
15. Behaviour overall is good and the implementation of the school behaviour policy is consistent and successful. The level of exclusions has fallen dramatically. Two pupils have been temporally excluded in the past twelve months and this has helped to reinforce the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils' learning attitudes and behaviour have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Around the school pupils show care and consideration towards each other and are courteous and polite towards adults. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and there is good racial harmony. When talking with pupils they say that their teachers are good at dealing with bullying or inconsiderate behaviour and do so in a just and fair way. Pupils say they enjoy school because it is a welcoming and safe place and they like their teachers and trust them.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	103	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

16. The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They develop good moral and social awareness through the good teaching and the values promoted through assemblies and the wider curriculum. The school provides a clear moral code that encourages a commitment toward the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity. Lessons devoted to personal, social, health education, citizenship and religious education reinforce moral and social values and contribute strongly to pupils' understanding of the spiritual and cultural dimension of their personal development. The multicultural dimension to the curriculum is satisfactory but needs to be further developed fully to prepare pupils for life in a modern multicultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

17. Attendance is unsatisfactory and has remained below the national average for primary schools for several years. Concerted efforts by the school to raise the levels of attendance by improving the co-operation of parents have not yet produced the desired results. Morning punctuality for those pupils who do attend regularly is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for **very well**. The partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall, particularly in Reception. Greater consistency in teaching is helping to boost pupils' achievement. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well.
- Teachers have adapted the curriculum to provide more practical opportunities for pupils to learn.
- Much improved analysis of data is providing teachers with a clearer knowledge of what pupils still need to do.

Commentary

18. The school was last inspected five terms ago. A key factor in the decision to remove the school from Special Measures was the significant recent improvement in the quality of teaching. At that stage, the majority of staff were experienced teachers who had been assigned to the school by the local education authority two terms before, in an attempt to tackle the endemic weaknesses in teaching. For several years, the turnover of temporary and supply staff had been extremely high and it had not been possible to attract permanent staff. The effects on pupils' learning and progress had been deeply negative.
19. In the short period since the 2002 inspection, the school, though still vulnerable, has consolidated its position to a significant extent. Some of the experienced staff from 2002 have moved on, others have joined the permanent staff at Beauherne. Crucially, the school now has a full, permanent staff who have chosen to join the school and are fully committed to its values. In the current inspection, the proportion of good or better teaching was almost identical to that in 2002, with no unsatisfactory teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	15	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

20. The proportion of good or better teaching is highest in Reception, where the overall quality of teaching is very good. Reception staff have a very good understanding of the areas of learning and work well in partnership with parents to enable children to learn well. Planning is very good, taking very good account of individual needs. The support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development, and for their mathematical, physical and creative development is particularly good. The development of speaking skills is a weaker feature. Staff achieve a very good balance between child-initiated learning and activities planned by the staff. Children's progress is carefully recorded. Assessment systems are good.
21. Currently, the proportion of good or better teaching is slightly higher in Years 1 and 2 (one class) than in Years 3 to 6 (four classes). Although there are no longer any concerns about pupils' behaviour, the residual effects of the lengthy period of turbulence in the school are most likely to show through with the older pupils. There is some evidence in pupils' recorded work for the last school year that expectations have not been as high as they should be, in relation to what pupils could be expected to produce, so that the basic skills deficit has not been tackled as quickly or as rigorously as it should have been. Marking was a weakness in the last school year, with little effort to let pupils know what it was they needed to do to improve. These are areas which the school is now tackling. Overall, the stability of staffing and the increased consistency of practice in the school are promoting consistent achievement in lessons and this is now satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in Reception.
22. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. All lessons seen were good or better. Achievement in this phase is satisfactory overall although in several lessons achievement was good. A key factor in this phase is the quality of relationships and the very positive ethos created by the teacher. Pupils respond very well to his imaginative approach and this is promoting good learning and improved achievement for these pupils. The teaching is brisk and motivates pupils well.
23. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is also good. The proportion of good or better teaching is lower. Here, as elsewhere in the school, the consistent quality of teaching is underpinned by good and consistent planning, teachers' good subject knowledge, the improved curriculum, high expectations and the very effective management of behaviour, and the improved quality of assessment. These features are now well-embedded. Older pupils show an increasing capacity to work independently or collaboratively. This encourages them to be more self-sufficient in their learning. Literacy skills are used increasingly effectively across the curriculum, although the quality and quantity of recorded work generally is an area for improvement. Some use is made of ICT to support learning across subjects, although this has been limited while the suite was out of commission. Teachers question pupils well and in the best lessons encourage them to think strategically. This approach was used well in several lessons in mathematics. Planning is good across the school and well-focused, in the core subjects, on individual learning needs.

24. Teachers' methods are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding. This was especially the case in a dynamic Year 1 and 2 science lesson on germs and disease. The opportunity for pupils to participate in an engaging activity while assimilating a key teaching point was well-managed. Recent curriculum changes have sought to identify more practically-based experiences likely to promote better learning for these pupils. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
25. No specific, separate teaching of pupils with special educational needs was observed. Generally, the provision of carefully chosen tasks, matched effectively to their levels of knowledge and understanding, helps to meet these pupils' needs and results in them learning well. The teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties. All staff implement the agreed behaviour management strategies well.
26. Satisfactory use overall is made of assessment to support the planning of work, which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs. Virtually all the structures have been introduced in the last year. The headteacher has focused staff on the analysis of performance and pupil progress; this is an emerging strength. The school is now better placed to identify underachievement early, thereby triggering some intervention. However, the strategies put in place, though secure, have had limited time to make an impact. Progress is tracked in writing and numeracy every half term. However, the school has further work to do in boosting pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy through the identification of progressive small-step targets for improvement for individual pupils. The school recognises that there is additional work to do in some foundation subjects. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good, with very detailed observational records maintained. Until recently there were significant variations in the quality of marking and the guidance for pupils to improve their work. However, the current term's work shows this to be better.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides **satisfactory** learning opportunities for all pupils. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been restructured to meet more appropriately pupils' learning needs.
- Extra-curricular provision is good and enriches the curriculum well.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The preparation for the later stages of education is good.

Commentary

27. The school has restructured its curriculum. The school felt that pupils needed a more practical approach to learning in order to raise standards. Due attention was also needed to ensure continuity in teaching and progression in pupils' learning which had been lacking in the past. Most foundation subjects are now taught within a series of

termly 'themes'. This is still relatively new and initial monitoring and evaluation have yet to take place to confirm the school's perception that this approach is raising standards. Emerging evidence indicates, for example, that some discrete teaching of religious education will be needed in order to cover the requirements of the Kent agreed syllabus. During the inspection pupils were enjoying their lessons and good learning was taking place. An effective example of this themed approach was observed in a science and history lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class. The teacher had devised a highly-motivating activity to show pupils how quickly germs spread. By putting his hand into a bag of glitter and then shaking hands with a pupil who in turn passed the hand shake on, the whole class soon had golden hands. Much delight was gained from this and the lesson was very effective in promoting pupils' learning. This more creative approach to the curriculum enables pupils to make connections across subjects and to bring their experiences from one subject into the learning of another.

28. The very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship contributes substantially to pupils' personal development. Pupils are also prepared well for the next stage of their education particularly when moving on to their secondary education. The school has very close links with the local secondary school and a substantial programme of visits by members of the secondary teaching staff has been set up to ensure a smooth transition for pupils. The school provides many extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning experiences.
29. Accommodation is good. With falling rolls the school has the advantage of having spare classrooms which are available for small group work if required. After a long period of instability the school is now well staffed with committed teachers and learning support staff.

Care, guidance and support

The pastoral care, welfare support and guidance provided by the school are **very good** and extremely well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Relationships are **very good**. Pupils trust the staff and know that their concerns and opinions are listened to and regarded as important. **Good** account is taken of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Welfare support and pastoral care are very good.
- The arrangements for child protection are excellent.
- There is mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- Importance is placed on dealing with pupils' concerns and taking account of their opinions.

Commentary

30. The welfare, pastoral care and support provided by the school are very good. Staff know the pupils very well and are sensitive to their personal needs. The school provides an environment in which pupils feel safe and are encouraged to work hard and achieve to the best of their ability. The individual guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good and for their academic development it is satisfactory. There is an excellent awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils and the arrangements for child protection are extremely effective because those responsible are experienced, well trained and vigilant. The school has developed excellent partnerships with social services and other external agencies that ensure the highest

quality of support and advice for vulnerable pupils and their families. In addition a family support worker is based in the school two days a week to help families and their children to get the most from their educational opportunities.

31. Rigorously managed health and safety procedures are very good. The headteacher and site manager have received appropriate training and ensure that all health and safety policies are effectively implemented. There is good provision for first aid. Pupils are well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely and to observe good standards of personal hygiene. The school is cleaned and maintained to a good standard. The premises committee of the governing body monitors health and safety practice and reports regularly to the full governing body.
32. There are very good arrangements for welcoming pupils and their families when they first join the school. The arrangements for pupils when they transfer to the main receiving secondary school are exceptionally good. The relationships and degree of trust between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils say they are confident that, if they have concerns or need to seek help or guidance, staff will listen and respond. There are good procedures for seeking pupils' views through the well-established School Council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works hard to develop the partnership with parents and to encourage them to support their children's learning. Links are **satisfactory** at present. The engagement with the local community and involvement in youth work and other community programmes are **very good**. The developing partnerships with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to develop a close partnership with parents.
- Outreach into the local community is very good.
- Involvement in youth work and other community programmes is well-developed.
- The links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Commentary

33. Currently the relationships between parents and the school are satisfactory. The school is making strenuous efforts to achieve a closer working partnership with its parents and the pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that they now feel welcome in the school and more comfortable about approaching staff. The views expressed by those who attended the pre-inspection meeting were consistently positive. The partnership between the school and parents has significantly improved since the previous inspection.
34. The information provided for parents is satisfactory. There are regular newsletters and parents receive a termly briefing on the curriculum and topic work that their children will be covering during the coming term. Parents are invited to attend the regular year group assemblies where their children's achievements are celebrated. Annual progress reports are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements but the prime focus of the subject reports is what pupils can do rather than on their progress, achievement and standards. Parents are offered regular opportunities to attend consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress and attendance at these meetings is good.

Overall the contribution that parents are currently making to their children's learning both at home and at school is satisfactory. The parent teacher association, led by a small group of committed and enthusiastic parents, organises social and fund raising activities for families and their children.

35. The education and family support programmes offered by the school are very good. As part of the Cascade Project a family support worker is based in the school for two days a week and is accessible to all families who have children attending the school. The family support and information available through the project covers any issue that is likely to affect the welfare of a pupil or impose a barrier to learning.
36. The school has established very good links with the wider community. The school has successfully placed itself at the heart of the community by providing a community room where meetings of organisations such as the residents' association and the community liaison committee are held. A youth project worker is also based in the school and with the use of school facilities provides a youth club and other after school activities on most days of the week. The school premises are increasingly becoming a community resource for youth work, social services and family support agencies.
37. There are exceptionally close links with the local high school. Regular exchanges of teachers between the two schools help with the development of close curriculum links and supports teacher training and professional development. The high school facilities are widely used for joint educational and leisure activities such as drama, music, French, athletics, tennis and other sports. The close relationship between the two schools ensures that the transfer arrangements for pupils moving into secondary education are very good. The management of all aspects of the shared provision between the two schools is very good. There are also very good links with other primary schools in the local cluster and with the pre-school group that operates on the same site.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. Management and governance are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher is providing effective leadership.
- Key members of staff work effectively overall, although some are relatively new to their posts.
- The analysis of how well pupils are learning is developing well.
- The school improvement plan needs a sharper focus to make it more effective in raising standards.

Commentary

38. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and is driving forward significant improvements. This is evident from the shared commitment and resolution of the staff to raise standards and improve provision. He has worked well to engender loyalty and promote teamwork. The headteacher's leadership of the curriculum has been helpful in making the learning experiences of pupils more relevant to their interests and needs.

This has good potential for raising standards, as does the headteacher's work to welcome more parents into school and promote greater involvement of parents in their children's education. The perception of the school in its community is now much stronger than in the past.

39. The leadership of other key staff is good. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. She fulfils her various roles well, including the co-ordination of the provision for special educational needs. This is marked by her extensive knowledge of pupils' needs and very good liaison with organisations outside the school that help individuals with specific problems. A number of subject leaders are relatively new. Although not all are yet fully effective, there are several examples of good leadership and, overall, a strong focus on the need to raise standards.
40. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very aware of the need to raise standards and actively seek new ways to improve their developing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The monitoring and review of the school improvement plan are strong features of their work, with individual governors taking responsibility for checking the progress towards achieving each objective. Governors have supported the school very well through a difficult period in its history, but have yet to play a full part in strategic planning. Problems in recruiting and retaining members reduce the overall effectiveness of the governing body. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
41. Management is satisfactory. The school is developing well its capacity for evaluating its performance. The headteacher has put in place an effective system for checking the progress of individual pupils and identifying those at risk of underachieving. This has much potential for helping to raise standards. There are good arrangements for helping staff new to the school and those starting their careers to settle in quickly and work effectively. Plans to bring about school improvement identify helpful objectives, but there are too many of these and neither priorities nor time scales are sufficiently sharply focused on raising standards quickly.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	576,284
Total expenditure	561,173
Expenditure per pupil	4,157

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	89,757
Balance carried forward to the next	104,868

42. The school was last audited in January 2003. A small number of relatively minor procedural matters were raised and these have been dealt with. Current day-to-day financial management and administration are good. Routine procedures run smoothly and the finance officer and office staff provide good support for staff and pupils. Governors do not, at present, have enough measures in place to evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending. Overall, however, funding is targeted satisfactorily to secure the best provision for pupils, with money assigned in the current year towards additional support for older pupils who have been particularly affected by the turbulence in the school in earlier years.
43. The school's finances have been significantly skewed for a number of reasons, including additional funding received while under special support by the local education

authority, rebated salary while the deputy headteacher was assigned to support other schools and additional funding relating to the proposed Federation. In addition, the school has unexpectedly become eligible for various grants in relation to its community and social provision. The school also receives a significant level of funding to support the high number of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, the school has accrued a significant underspend, in excess of recommended levels. The surplus is likely to be reduced during this school year to fund additional support, with a view to raising standards at the top of the school. Overall, however, the school is very highly-funded in national terms. Although pupils are now receiving a satisfactory education and the school has a number of emerging and established strengths, standards are not yet sufficiently high and achievement has, until recently, been variable. In that context and in relation to the high level of funding, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and is one of the school's strengths.

44. All children enter Reception on a full-time basis. At the time of the inspection, most of the children were still four years old. Records indicate that for almost every recent cohort, standards on entry to the Reception year (Foundation Stage) have been low in relation to those expected for children of this age. The development of personal and social skills and most aspects of communication, language and literacy have been conspicuous weaknesses. The group of children that entered Reception recently is, however, an exception. They have benefited from the enhanced provision in the voluntary pre-school group, located on the school premises, which almost all entrants to the reception class attend. The Reception teacher feels that the current close working partnership with the pre-school ensures that children now have a significantly improved start. The pre-school curriculum, record-keeping and ethos are now closely aligned to those of the Reception class and this provides for a seamless transition. The current entrants are, in many cases, significantly further advanced than would, typically, have been the case in the past. While there is still a range of maturity and prior experience evident, at least half of the group are already working at the level expected. Currently, the achievement of all children, including those few who are being monitored for possible special educational needs, is good. A broad and enriched curriculum is in place. Standards at present are average overall, though weaker in aspects of language than in other areas. By the end of the Reception year, the great majority of the children are likely to achieve the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning, with several exceeding them. This is, however, not a typical profile.
45. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The Reception teacher has a very clear vision for future development. Her management is good. Through her knowledgeable leadership of the curriculum, she provides a very good role model for staff and has created an effective team. The level of care and the quality of support are very good. Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning. The teacher encourages and challenges children and insists on high standards of behavior and is very well supported by the teaching assistant. Children's very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships and their ability to maintain concentration contribute well to their good achievement. Thorough assessment of children's progress informs planning and is used well to meet individual needs. Very detailed observational records are maintained. Accommodation is good. The outdoor area, though not covered, is well equipped and is used well to complement the indoor classroom. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and the cornerstone, particularly with the current cohort, upon which Years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to build.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good planned opportunities for children to become independent learners.
- Relationships are very positive; children work very well together.

Commentary

46. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are, for several children, above those expected for their age. Children make very good progress and achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching. Carefully planned activities engage their interest and match their learning needs. They respond very well to what is provided and soon become independent users of the classroom and the outdoor area. Space is used imaginatively to create a stimulating learning environment, in which good resources are accessible to children and encourage autonomy and independence. They learn to select activities and use resources independently, logging their activities on the 'choices' board. Children are encouraged to initiate ideas and explain what they are doing. They are given opportunities to plan and carry out some activities on their own and, increasingly, to review their learning. Children are expected to be sensitive to the needs, ideas and feelings of others. Most children understand the difference between right and wrong and gradually accept the need for a common code of behaviour. They learn that people deserve to be treated with respect. Even at this early stage in the year, the great majority of the children are able to sustain attention on their chosen activities and there is almost no flitting between tasks. An air of purposeful calm pervades the Reception area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are well-planned opportunities to develop children's language.
- Basic skills of listening, reading and writing are taught well.
- Children's prior experience of language and literacy skills is less secure than other areas. Speaking skills are underdeveloped for the majority of children.

Commentary

47. Standards in communication, language and literacy are below those expected for children of this age. The children have less developed early skills in language than in other areas. However, children of all abilities make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily as a result of the good teaching. They are taught to be good listeners and are very attentive whenever adults or their classmates are speaking. Speaking skills are less well developed. While the class teacher models language very well there are still some missed opportunities for children to develop more extended sentences when they speak. The classroom is very quiet! The National Literacy Strategy is introduced gradually in Reception. The systematic emphasis on sounds, letter shapes and word-building skills helps children's language development. In one session, the teacher discussed 'sound' words and used a Big Book as the source for the current nursery rhyme 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. Sessions are structured to provide time for individual choice. Their language skills are also developed through role-play in 'Beauherne Cottage', listening to stories and sequencing events using picture cards of varying

levels of challenge. Children begin to develop their reading skills through listening to traditional stories and poems, and talking about the pictures to appreciative and interested adults! Children often choose to use the small reading corner and good habits of handling books and looking closely at the pictures are actively reinforced. They are still in the early stages of developing letter formation through practical activities, such as tracing letters and names, tracking letters in sand, with a few attempting basic letter strings. At this stage in the year, however, writing skills are rudimentary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical skills are reinforced very effectively through well-planned practical activities.

Commentary

48. Standards by the end of the Reception year are likely to be above those expected for children of this age for a significant number of these children. Very good teaching ensures that most children are making very good progress in counting, reading and ordering numbers, and achieve very well. Oral work in each lesson is reinforced through relevant practical activities. They count the children in their group. Most children count to five and some to ten, while the most advanced child counts to 20. They have an early understanding of the connection between addition and counting on. The majority are confident with the idea of 'one more', while some understand the implications of 'one less'. They experience these concepts practically, as when they sing 'Ten Green Bottles' or play outdoor skittles and gradually reduce their original number. They describe some of the properties of simple shapes. When painting zoo pictures, children talk about triangles and rectangles confidently. They recite the days of the week. Through sand and water play, they have an emerging understanding of capacity and weight, and use words such as 'bigger' and 'smaller', with understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's understanding is developed well through a broad range of activities.
- Children have good access to the computer.

Commentary

49. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are similar to those expected for the majority of children. Children make good progress and achieve well, as a result of consistently good teaching. No opportunity is missed to explain how things work. They investigate how magnets work and test their hypotheses on random groups of objects. One child already knows that magnets 'pull things towards them' and others are gradually able to predict what will be attracted and what not. The teacher constantly

reiterates key vocabulary, such as 'magnetic' and 'metal'. They investigate living things and have regular visits from small animals. They investigate 'minibeasts' and insects. They grow, observe and paint sunflowers and other plants. They observe how a model car behaves on a ramp and describe its motion. They look at shelters and houses. They compare toys of today to those of the past, so that their historical knowledge is extended. Computer skills are developed progressively and children use a range of software to support the development of reading, writing, number, sorting, matching and word processing skills. Several children already have good mouse control skills. Children make good gains in their knowledge of the cultures, values, and traditions of others, as they listen to stories from other cultures. Their understanding of being part of a community develops well through visits and visitors.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have access to the good facilities for physical education in the main school.
- Children are very disciplined in their physical activities, waste no time and make very good progress. Standards are above those normally found.

Commentary

50. Standards in physical development are above those expected. Children make very good progress and achieve very well, as a result of very good teaching. Good use is made of the well-equipped outdoor area and of the school hall. Children are taught to develop an awareness of space through a range of activities. The majority of children move with confidence, imagination, control, co-ordination and an awareness of others, both in the hall and outside. They understand the need to stop and start on request. Children negotiate space successfully, adjusting speed and changing direction to avoid obstacles. They develop a good range of basic skills, using small and large equipment. They throw and catch with developing accuracy. Their awareness of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet improves, and they recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. One boy knew that he breathed hard because he was tired. Attitudes were excellent in the hall session observed, Children conducted themselves with maturity and independence with absolutely no time wasted. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well. Children demonstrate increasing control in handling tools, objects and construction materials safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to explore various media in art, to make music and to use their imaginations.
- There are some missed opportunities for the further development of children's speaking skills.

Commentary

51. Standards in creative development are above those expected, as a result of well-planned opportunities and the very good teaching. Examples of children's work demonstrate very good achievement even at an early stage of the year. Learning areas are well-organised and this has a positive effect on children's creativity. With very effective support, they use primary colours boldly, imaginatively and with considerable control in their paintings and are able to select colours accurately. Using a variety of techniques, they show developing skill in creating handprint patterns and pictures. They produce ocean scenes with sea creatures. They develop skills in making model mice from clay, using construction kits and reclaimed materials. As adults work alongside children and talk to them about their task, children improve their language skills and extend their vocabulary. They work well both independently and in groups and show good skills for their age, when drawing, painting and joining materials. Children's musical skills develop well, as they communicate their ideas imaginatively through music and role-play, and accompany music with their voices and percussion instruments. They recognise instruments and their distinctive sounds, sound patterns and loud and quiet sounds, and sing simple songs from memory.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is satisfactory but standards are not high enough.
- The lessons seen were of good quality, but marking is not helping enough to develop basic skills.
- Planning has not, in the past, been adapted sufficiently to improve skills quickly.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to refine writing skills in other subjects.

Commentary

52. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, but standards are not high enough and there is evidence that hitherto pupils have underachieved. The attainment of children when they join the school is low, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and there is a very high level of pupils admitted to and leaving the school at other than the normal times. However, the observation of lessons indicates that pupils currently achieve satisfactorily because the quality of teaching is good and staff are firmly committed to raising standards.
53. In speaking and listening, pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. In Year 2, standards are slightly below the expected levels. Pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately, but their speech often lacks in clarity. Pupils in Year 6 attain below the expected level and also listen more effectively than they speak. Their speech is functional rather than confident and too little attention is paid to the listeners' needs.
54. Pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory in reading. The difficult problems many pupils face and the many changes of teacher have contributed to reading standards that are well below average. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading and make appropriate use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. However, their reading is hesitant and sometimes lacks accuracy. The reading of average pupils in Year 6 lacks expression and they do not always recognise and correct errors. More able pupils read accurately and expressively, and have well established preferences for different genres.
55. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards of writing in Year 2 are below average, but achievement is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils have not achieved satisfactorily as they have passed through the school and standards are well below average. No matter what their ability, pupils are not required to complete enough written work. There is evidence that either pupils do not work quickly enough or they are not given enough time to complete writing tasks. The standards attained at the start of the academic year have not always been built on sufficiently as the year progresses. This is particularly true of handwriting.
56. The quality of teaching and learning was good, overall, in the lessons observed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and, as a result, behaviour and levels of concentration are good. Teachers work well to engage pupils' attention and the good relationships they build with their classes help to motivate most children effectively. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the very good use of praise and opportunities, through drama, for pupils to empathise with soldiers in the Crimean

War had a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and on their oracy skills. However, the analysis of last year's work shows that in most classes teachers paid too little attention in their marking to giving guidance about how to improve basic skills, such as handwriting and punctuation.

57. There is too little evidence to judge the impact of the work of the co-ordinator on standards, since a member of staff has been holding the post temporarily for only a few weeks. Some adaptation of the curriculum has taken place, although there has not yet been time for this to have a significant effect upon standards. Although monitoring of pupils' work has been carried out regularly and conscientiously, there has, until recently, been insufficient diagnosis of the weaknesses in the development of basic skills, followed by short-term planning to deal with these specific issues. However, recently-introduced data-analysis systems are now providing staff with much more detailed information and staff are increasingly ready to respond to the needs identified. Standards are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection, but given the adverse circumstances in which the school operates and the many factors that make learning difficult for pupils, improvement in the provision since then has been adequate.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Some good examples of work that helps to increase English skills were seen, including a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 in which pupils had to read carefully in order to design and make products such as pizzas. However, overall, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards remain too low, but pupils' achievement is improving.
- Teaching is now good. Pupils are challenged effectively in most classes and managed well.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively.
- The marking of pupils' work is not rigorous enough.
- Standards of presentation were not high enough in the last school year.
- ICT has had limited impact on the quality of learning in mathematics recently; the enhanced ICT suite provides the opportunity for its increased use.

Commentary

59. Standards in mathematics are well below average in Years 2 and 6. Standards in mathematics have been unsatisfactory in recent years. To a large extent, this is the result of the school's very difficult circumstances, inconsistent teaching because of the very high level of teacher mobility and a challenging intake with, at every level, very limited prior experience of mathematics. Achievement has been unsatisfactory in the recent past, but there is every indication in lessons and in pupils' current work, that serious, and increasingly successful, efforts are being made to deal with pupils' significant learning deficits. The overall good quality of teaching and learning observed, and the rigour of approach, indicate that achievement is currently satisfactory.

60. The test results at age seven in 2004 were lower than in 2003; at age 11, they were higher (though still below the national average). The indications are that there will be a further rise at age 11 in the current year, with targets likely to be met, and a particularly strong Year 6 cohort coming through in 2006. The current Year 4 is very small while the current Year 3 has a very high level of special educational needs. Standards in Year 2 are likely to show some improvement in the current year, with pupils likely to achieve standards closer to, though still below, the national average. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, making at least satisfactory progress. The school's significant success in dealing with the rooted behaviour problems which had dogged it for many years has made for a much improved learning environment. There are no significant variations in pupils' attainment by gender, although, where behavioural issues have existed in the past, they have tended to be reflected in underperformance by boys. However, the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in either Years 2 or 6 is low.
61. There is a satisfactory focus on securing basic numeracy skills throughout the school and, particularly in Year 1 to 4, there is evidence of some thorough work to reinforce basic understanding. This is crucial because of the significant deficits of learning for some pupils. In Years 1 and 2, the scrutiny of last year's work indicates that more could have been done to provide pupils with greater experience of the systematic recording of work. Often, the quantity of work was too low, but this has improved in the current year. Older pupils in the last school year had covered an appropriate range of work. However, the overall quantity of work and opportunity to practise skills learned is often insufficient to consolidate pupils' understanding and confidence. The pace of learning, on the evidence of the lessons observed, is improving. Problem-solving is a weaker feature overall, often because pupils' basic language skills are not sufficiently robust for them easily to interpret the context and detail of a problem. Curriculum coverage is satisfactory. Teachers are working hard to provide pupils with practical tasks to develop their understanding of key concepts. However, there is scope for the greater use of investigative work across the school.
62. Teaching is good, although there is ample evidence to indicate that this had not always been so. Current strengths include the careful planning of lessons and the increasingly accurate match of work to pupils' needs. This is underpinned by the more robust assessment structures which are now in place. Expectations are higher. Almost all teachers are highly-skilled in the management of challenging behaviour on the now infrequent occasions when it arises and this is crucial in sustaining a positive climate for learning for all pupils. They receive good support from the well-prepared and proactive support staff. Teachers use language well and question pupils carefully to ensure that they understand. The presentation of pupils' work could be improved. There has been limited use of computers to support learning in mathematics recently as the suite has not been available. There was good evidence during the inspection that staff have the capability to use ICT effectively to extend pupils' understanding of mathematics.
63. The majority of teachers use assessment satisfactorily to guide their planning of future work. The school has begun to establish targets for each year group. However, individual target-setting, with short-term, achievable targets has yet to be tackled. A weaker feature is the inconsistency of marking across the school. Though not an issue in the current year, there is evidence of some poor quality marking of work in the last school year. Some teachers do not include any developmental comments, so that pupils

have no clear idea of what they need to do next. Homework arrangements are satisfactory across the school.

64. The co-ordinator is effective and, although she has only recently returned to the school, has a very clear grasp of what needs to be done. She has good opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Pupils occasionally use mathematics to support their work in other subjects and there is some evidence of this in science and in geography. They use graphs and tables as a means of recording data in science and practise their skills in measuring when they undertake practical tasks in design and technology. This is a satisfactory feature at present, though with significant scope for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The revised curriculum, with a greater focus on practical activities, is well-matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Standards in science are well below average in Years 2 and 6.

Commentary

66. Standards at Years 2 and 6 in 2004 were well below average. This primarily reflects the legacy of a lack of continuity in pupils' learning due to frequent changes of staff over a long period. However, currently achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This was clearly evident in lessons observed with Years 3 and 4. The topic was healthy eating and teachers had prepared a lesson which had close links to pupils' history topic on the Romans. A carefully chosen selection of typical 'Roman' food (grapes, dates, olives, anchovies, olive oil and ciabatta bread) was offered to the pupils to taste. Most of the pupils did not know what they were and had no idea whether a date, olive or anchovy was a fruit or fish. Poor skills in literacy also have an adverse affect on progress in science. Because the pupils have had such limited educational experiences before starting school, staff make huge efforts to provide stimulating classroom experiences.
67. There has been good input to the science curriculum recently. Led by the acting headteacher and science co-ordinator, staff have looked closely at the curriculum and have implemented a more practical approach in their teaching, which better suits the learning needs of pupils. However, this is relatively new and further monitoring is needed to confirm that it is raising standards. Certainly, during the inspection pupils were enjoying their science lessons and good learning was occurring because of the good teaching. Staffing is now stable and the new curriculum ensures that sufficient science is taught, with appropriate progression of skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year.

68. Science is now being co-ordinated by a competent and enthusiastic teacher. He is determined that standards will rise and the potential for this is good. He has a practical and realistic action plan which includes more rigorous monitoring and better assessment of pupils' progress. Resources are adequate and the local environment is used well to enhance learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new ICT suite has just been opened.
- Standards, though satisfactory at Year 2, are below expectations in Year 6.

Commentary

69. There has been improvement in ICT since the last inspection. The school has developed a large computer suite which was opened immediately before the inspection. Although this replaced a pre-existing facility, this had been out of use for the early part of the term. In spite of this, three good lessons were observed and pupils were enjoying working in the new surroundings. Year 1 and 2 pupils were first taught how to log on to the new system and then shown how to put images and text together. Good links were established with their history topic on Florence Nightingale which made the learning of skills relevant. Most pupils import pictures and move these images around the page before adding text. Behaviour and attitudes to work were good and this contributed to the good learning. Similarly in both the Year 5 and 6 lessons, behaviour and attitudes to work were good and pupils learned well. Although attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with what is expected of pupils of this age, this is not the case by the age of 11. The reason for this is a long period of instability with changes in staffing and poor resourcing. Pupils have had no opportunity to learn how to send emails and limited access to web-sites, but with new facilities and better teaching this situation can be remedied quickly.
70. Teachers' expertise has improved since the last inspection and teachers are generally more confident in teaching ICT. However, there were too few lessons observed to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning and only a limited amount of previous work was available for analysis.
71. The subject is led and managed by the headteacher who has identified the subject as an area for further development. He is aware of the need to implement an assessment system and to ensure access to email. The subject improvement plan tackles these areas.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used satisfactorily to support other subjects; for example work in history.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

- 73. No judgement has been made about provision or standards in religious education (RE) as no lessons were observed during the inspection. It is not possible to judge progress since the last inspection.
- 74. Currently religious education is taught through the new topic structure which the school introduced recently. The subject is planned in blocks of teaching with tentative links to the class topic. However, the school has already identified that some aspects of the RE curriculum will not be taught in sufficient depth through topic work and that some specific teaching of RE will be needed to cover the locally agreed syllabus.
- 75. No lessons were observed with the older pupils in **history**. The two history lessons observed were with lower juniors, although the focus of one of the lessons was primarily an art activity. The subject has a new co-ordinator who has already looked carefully at planning to establish what action is needed to raise standards. The subject is well resourced and learning is enhanced well by theme days and visits to museums and places of historical interest.
- 76. In **geography** part of one lesson was observed in the Year 1 and 2 class. Pupils were engaged in plotting Florence Nightingale's journey to the Crimea. This proved challenging for many of the pupils, who needed close adult supervision to complete the task.
- 77. Pupils show a keen interest in people and places. The themed approach to the curriculum ensures good links between the two subjects and makes learning more creative, relevant and purposeful.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 78. **Art and design** was not a focus of the inspection and since only one lesson was observed no judgement is made of the provision. In this good lesson, the brisk pace and high expectations of the teacher helped pupils to achieve well in making clay pots in the Roman style. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement overall. Scrutiny of pupils' sketchbooks and displayed work indicated that a suitable range of experiences is provided and these are securely based on pupils learning first hand. However, pupils are sometimes not given enough time to finish work, resulting in a lack of detail in their drawings.
- 79. The subject is led and managed well. The good work of the co-ordinator in monitoring the quality of lessons and providing training to improve the quality of teaching is helping to raise standards. The good links made with the nearby secondary school are a strong feature of the provision, as is the emphasis placed on widening pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists from different cultures.
- 80. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. Therefore, no judgement is made of provision or the quality of teaching and learning. Too little of pupils' work was available to form reliable judgements about standards. However, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays in classrooms shows that pupils follow an appropriate programme of work. A strong feature of the range of learning experiences are the links

made between design and technology and other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make Jamaican rock cakes, complementing their study of the work of a poet from that country. They also research, design and make ties and headscarves as part of a history project about the 1960s. The products seen were of a satisfactory standard.

81. It was not possible to gather enough evidence to judge the provision for **music**. No lessons were observed and only a brief discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator. Good links with the local secondary school provide opportunities for pupils to be taught to play instruments such as the saxophone and violin. The level of expertise on the staff is good; both the co-ordinator and the headteacher are practising musicians. Pupils get good opportunities to perform, both within school and in the community, especially at Christmas. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of the co-ordinator's work. He is aware of the need to increase the effectiveness of the assessment of pupils' progress in raising standards.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Expectations are high. Skills are taught effectively, enabling pupils to achieve well.
- Provision is enriched by a good programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Pupils are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their work.
- The school is well-resourced for physical education, with spacious indoor and outdoor facilities.

Commentary

82. Physical education is a well-established element of the curriculum. The school has sustained good breadth of provision and the rigour with which the subject is taught suggests that improvement has been good. Only games activities were observed. Standards in this element of the curriculum are similar to those normally found at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' good achievement is boosted by the good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for swimming enables the majority of pupils to achieve the expected standard (25 metres unaided) by the end of Year 6.
83. Year 2 pupils were observed in a very successful games coaching session where they were being taught to respond promptly to instructions during games. This was a very good session, largely because of the high quality of the teaching and the high expectations set. The pace was brisk, with clear instructions and input to skills coaching. Pupils collaborated very well and no time was wasted. Although opportunities for evaluation were constrained by the nature of the activity, there was an appropriate focus on health and safety issues and on the effects of exercise on health. Similar strengths were evident in a Year 4 lesson, where pupils were extending their skills in passing and ball control. The activities were challenging and the pace of teaching kept pupils very focused. Although pupils' competence was not beyond what might be seen normally, their commitment and very good attitudes meant that they were making good progress and achieving well. Across the school, there is a focus on developing pupils'

evaluative skills. Pupils are always appropriately changed for physical activities and have a good grasp of how strenuous physical activities affect their bodies. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well where necessary.

84. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching observed in Years 1 and 2. Several staff have specialist subject knowledge and this gives a confidence and consistency to the teaching across the school. Planning is detailed and provides well for the range of needs in each class. Teachers manage pupils very well. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. Occasionally, where low level distractions arise, as in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the situation is managed briskly and effectively. The pace of the best lessons is a key strength. Pupils are challenged throughout and respond very positively. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' social development. Assessment procedures continue to evolve and are satisfactory overall, with an increasing emphasis on pupil self-evaluation.
85. The good programme of additional sporting activities and clubs enriches the curriculum significantly, although activities are not always supported as fully as they might be by pupils. The annual residential visit provides opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities.
86. The temporary co-ordinator has specialist skills in physical education, has a good overview of the subject and supports colleagues well. He has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject on. The school is well-resourced for physical education. The site provides extensive outdoor space, both hard-surface and grass, and there are two large, well-equipped halls.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

87. The school provides a very good curriculum to support the progressive development of pupils' personal and social development, their health education and their growing awareness of the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship. These carefully-structured programmes are contributing strongly to the significantly improved behaviour across the school. Two sessions each week are used to explore a weekly focus ('co-operation' during the period of the inspection) and to deal with specific class or personal issues through 'circle time'. In these class discussions, pupils have good opportunities to share ideas and talk about their experiences and feelings in a supportive and secure environment. Pupils listen thoughtfully to each other, with respect, and express their own thoughts clearly. Such sessions have become increasingly productive as the staff has stabilised and the sense of community within the school is more securely underpinned. Issues such as sex and relationships education and drugs education are delivered either through a specific programme or as part of the science curriculum. The school promotes healthier eating, aiming to help pupils make sensible diet choices. Overall, most pupils develop a good understanding of how their decisions affect their own and others' lives and learn how they might become responsible members of a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
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	5
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
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	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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