

INSPECTION REPORT

GRAVEL HILL PRIMARY

Bexleyheath

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101407

Headteacher: Miss L Fisher

Lead inspector: Sandra Tweddell

Dates of inspection: 27 – 29 September 2004

Inspection number: 266905

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:	210
School address:	Watling Street Bexleyheath Kent
Postcode:	DA6 7QJ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Teale
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Gravel Hill is an average sized primary school with 210 pupils on roll. In Years 4, 5 and 6, there are more boys than girls. The nursery takes 22 children on a part-time basis and there are 9 children in the reception class. Children, enter school with attainment that is below average and many boys with well below average attainment. Children come from a wide range of social backgrounds and a significant number are from families who need support from the local authority. Mobility of pupils is high. The number of children who are eligible for free school meals is above that of most schools. There is a much higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, although the number of pupils with a statement is about the same as most schools. Many of these pupils have dyslexia, moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. More pupils than in most schools come from homes in which English is the second language, but almost all are proficient in using English. The school is recognised as a Healthy School and has achieved Investor In People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Gravel Hill Primary school gives its pupils a satisfactory education. Value for money is sound. Until recently, achievement in English and mathematics was very good and standards average, but curriculum change has caused a dip, so achievement is satisfactory. Standards are below average overall. The recently appointed headteacher, along with her deputy, give good leadership and, as a result, teaching and learning are good and achievement is improving quickly. Management is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Effective leadership that has identified what needs to be done to raise standards and is taking actions to ensure that this happens.
- As the school has recognised, standards are still too low in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and learning are good because of management action.
- Attendance has improved significantly during the past year, but is still below average.
- Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work.
- The staff work effectively as a team and this contributes to a good learning environment.
- Governors know the school well and have plans for a new way of working. These need to be implemented.
- Statutory requirements for religious education are not met.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All subjects are now regularly assessed and assessment is being used to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics, although there is more to do. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is often good in lessons. ICT is taught well, making good use of the new computer suite. Pupils' work is usually neat and tidy.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and is improving because of rigorous action by senior managers. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment and many of the boys have well below average attainment. By the end of the reception year, many children do not reach the expected goals. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing and mathematics, although below average, have been in line with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards in reading have been lower. At this time of the year, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to attain more highly although they will still be below average, except in information and communication technology (ICT) where achievement is good and standards are average, and religious education where they remain low. Many pupils have poor skills of literacy and numeracy which affects their progress in all subjects. Boys achieve as well as girls, although standards of their work are lower in English. Pupils from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school achieve satisfactorily and the few pupils for whom English is a new language achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils achieve

satisfactorily. The large number of pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily and often well.

Pupils' personal development is good as is their moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well and are keen to learn. A significant number of pupils have poor skills of concentration and listening, but are managed well so do not disturb the rest. Attendance was very low but has improved because of a determined effort by the senior management team and is now below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning have recently improved and are now generally good especially in English, mathematics and science. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory; a comprehensive system of monitoring how well pupils progress has been introduced and teachers are starting to use it to help their planning. Most teachers are skilled at making lessons interesting and they challenge pupils well through their questions.

The curriculum has been reviewed and broadened but because the provision for religious education does not meet statutory requirements, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school works effectively with parents and looks after its pupils well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy is good. The headteacher has used all the information about the school's performance very well to set a clear direction, and improvements are already being made. Governance is sound. Governors know the school well through their visits and are beginning to ask key questions of senior managers. Governors know more needs to be done and have formulated an action plan to extend their role. The school does not comply with requirements for teaching religious education.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think that behaviour and teaching are good, and staff expect their child to work hard. Children are encouraged to become mature and are helped to settle into school well. The inspection found these views justified. A few had concerns about bullying, information about how well their child is doing in school, how they can help their child with homework and that their views are not taken into account. These views were found to be unjustified. The team agreed with children when they say they have to work hard, are shown how to improve their work, find other children friendly, feel that teachers listen to them and that they have an adult they can turn to if they are troubled. A number think that lessons are not interesting, that they are not given help when stuck and feel that other children do not behave well. The inspection found no evidence to justify these opinions.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all teachers use the information from the tracking of the progress to further raise the standards of all groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Extend pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy by planning to use them in all subjects.
- Implement the plans to involve all governors in reviewing the work of the school.
- Continue to improve attendance.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the requirements for teaching religious education are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory and pupils who are new to English achieve well. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Achievement in the foundation stage is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of English, mathematics and science are still too low and many pupils have poor skills of literacy and numeracy that affects their attainment in most subjects.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.5 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.9 (27.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Prior to 2003, pupils performed well in national tests at the end of Year 6 and their achievement was very good. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics had been rising more quickly than nationally, although standards in science have been well below average. For the past two years, standards in Year 6 have fallen. One reason is a move from a narrow curriculum that focused mainly on English and mathematics to a broad one that covers the requirements of the National Curriculum in greater depth. Another is exceptionally high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 classes. There have also been staffing difficulties which have affected the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4. These problems have now been resolved.
2. The school has a significant number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties or come from homes that need support. It also has many pupils who arrive after the reception year and many who leave. The good records of progress show that most of the pupils who did not do as well as they were predicted to, came from homes where there were some family problems, had recently arrived into the school or have emotional problems. Staff are working closely with many families to support these children to try to ensure that they do as well as they possibly can.
3. Children in the nursery and reception class achieve satisfactorily and they achieve more successfully in the reception class where the teaching is more closely focused on their needs. Their attainment on entry is below average and boys' attainment is often well below average, particularly in language and mathematics. When children leave the reception class, their attainment is still below average, although their personal and social development are closer to average.

4. The new headteacher has reviewed and refined the management systems, introduced a good range of actions to improve teaching and raise standards, and her actions are starting to improve the achievement of all pupils. In almost all literacy, numeracy and science lessons, all groups of pupils are achieving well. This is particularly noticeable in science which, until recently, has been the poor relation in the curriculum so standards have never been high. Professional development and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning have improved the provision. The most useful improvement is the tracking of pupils' progress. This shows at a glance which pupils are doing well and the ones who need more support. The information is used to target pupils, especially those who could be doing better. All teachers have records for their class and all find them extremely helpful. They are beginning to use the information when planning lessons and are aware that they need to further develop their skills in this. This is an appropriate target in the school improvement plan. Standards in English, mathematics and science are rising quickly in all years because of these improvements to leadership and management systems.
5. Teachers have looked at ways to motivate boys as they have not achieved as well as girls. Boys are achieving satisfactorily because of methods such as short, sharp activities, careful choice of resources that appeal to boys and the use of ICT. A method introduced by the headteacher is for the learning support assistant (LSA) to monitor responses in lessons by boys and girls and whether the teacher includes both boys and girls in his or her questioning. This has helped to raise teachers' awareness of the need to involve all groups of pupils.
6. Many pupils have poor skills of literacy which affects their ability to do well in all subjects. Staff are looking to introduce more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Some pupils, often boys, have poor skills of listening and many others have poor skills of recall. This affects their achievement as teachers have to repeat information in a variety of ways which slows down their progress.
7. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support and teachers are given many helpful ideas about how to develop these pupils' English. As a result, the pupils achieve well. The pupils from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds achieve satisfactorily and are beginning to achieve well because of the new approaches.
8. Standards of ICT have been supported by good use of the ICT suite and skilful teaching of ICT skills. Pupils make good progress and standards are broadly average. Standards in religious education are affected by the unsatisfactory provision so are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
9. Pupils are starting to make good progress and standards are beginning to rise across the school because of thoughtful and rigorous management action and the effective team work of the staff who are working hard to provide consistently good teaching and to help the pupils achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are good. Their moral, social and cultural development is good and their spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance has improved significantly over the past year, although is still below average.
- The school sets high expectations of good behaviour and nearly all pupils respond well, enabling teachers to concentrate on teaching.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work resulting in them learning well.
- The development of pupils' cultural and social understanding is carried out well.

Commentary

10. As soon as they start school, pupils are made aware that good behaviour is required and school and class rules emphasise this. This high expectation of behaviour is supported by a good policy of using encouragement, rewards and where necessary sanctions. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Most pupils show self control, which allows teachers to focus on teaching with only minor reminders to pupils to behave. During playtime outside, pupils are lively, energetic and well behaved, and they play well together.
11. Pupils enjoy school. They are keen to get on with their work – especially the more practical aspects - and usually listen well (although there are a significant number who find it hard to concentrate fully). They contribute well to the overall learning of the classes, apply themselves effectively, want to be involved are enthusiastic. They co-operate well in joint activities and work hard individually. These positive attitudes enable them to learn well from lessons, especially when teaching is stimulating and interesting.
12. The development of pupils' knowledge about social issues and other cultures is a strong feature of the school's work. Spiritual development is not as strong as other areas of personal development as there are few opportunities to appreciate the world in which we live. Pupils learn about their immediate community of the school and the local area. They also find out about life in other countries such as the context and implications of the recent disasters in Florida and Beslan. There is a thorough structure of provision for social and moral development through the visitors to the school, such as police, Salvation Army, local clergy and the fire brigade to talk about their work, and visits in support of curriculum topics where pupils mix with other pupils and adults. The strong school council and supporting class councils provide good demonstration of social structure and pupils learn about right and wrong and respect for the feelings of others throughout their schooling.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.0	School data	1.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

13. Attendance levels in 2002/3 were very low in comparison with other schools but, during this last school year, they have improved substantially (from 89.7% to 93.4%) although they are still below average. The school is working hard to improve attendance by using a good range of strategies such as praise and rewards for good attendance, telephone calls to parents as well as reminder letters, newsletter articles, sanctions - and regular involvement with the Educational Welfare Officer for pupils with particular problems. At the parents' meeting, parents were well aware that attendance is something the school was focusing on.
14. A combination of high levels of miscellaneous sickness and some parents not supporting the school by ensuring the regular attendance of their children result in this unsatisfactory level of attendance. Some parents take their children out of school to gain the advantage of cheaper holidays. These absences affect the learning of those pupils and also the learning of those who do attend as teachers have to ensure that those who have been away catch up.

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	144	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

15. Exclusions are seen as a last resort by staff who do all they can to support pupils within school. The ones above involved one pupil and were justified.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This is satisfactory with strengths in the quality of teaching and learning which are good. The curriculum has many strengths but is unsatisfactory as the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory. Links with parents are good and pupils are cared for well.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching is ensuring that most pupils learn well, although some pupils with special educational needs forget easily and this slows down their progress. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is starting to be used well but more needs to be done.
- Teachers manage behaviour well and good relationships make pupils want to learn.
- ICT is used effectively to support learning.
- Learning support assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs learn well.
- Work is pitched at an appropriate level for all groups of pupils in the classes for English, mathematics and science, but not always in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	8 (26%)	12 (39%)	10 (32%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. The table above shows why achievement and standards are improving across the school. Staffing has stabilised, the headteacher's monitoring of teaching is helping teachers to improve their skills and to learn from the best practice of others, and consequently teaching is now good. Parents are correct in their opinions that teaching is good.
17. The effective teaching of boys has been a focus for improvement at the school and all teachers use appropriate resources to motivate boys whilst being aware of the need to interest girls as well. In many lessons, boys were enthusiastic to respond, particularly in a Year 5 lesson which used a book about football as a starting point. In this lesson, the boys were eager to put forward ideas. The pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are taught well as the school values all cultures. One girl proudly spoke of a Hindu film she had watched where the language was Hindi. She and another girl communicate in their home languages. Both were pleased to discuss their cultures with adults and other pupils because of the encouragement from staff. There are a few pupils for whom English is a new language. The support given by external agencies and the use by teachers of the resources they provide ensure that these pupils learn well.
18. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged by the questions that are asked. These probe their understanding and provoke thought so that their learning is deepened or extended. Teachers are skilled at framing questions at the appropriate level for different groups of pupils so that they are all challenged. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were actively involved in adding and subtracting bricks from a tower to make it the same height as another, through careful questions. The style of questioning supported the good achievement in the lesson.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants in all classes support pupils well and promote the learning of literacy and numeracy skills among pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the special educational needs co-ordinator works in classrooms alongside the class teacher to provide help for identified individuals and small groups on a regular basis. Class teachers take into account the attainment and needs of pupils with special educational needs to support them in their lessons. The teaching of these pupils, led by the example set by the co-ordinator, is sensitive, directed well at the requirements set out in their individual education plans and shows good knowledge of techniques that will help them to progress. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are starting to achieve well.
20. Within classes, pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported by their teachers and learning support assistants and their achievement is good. Specialist support teachers assess and record pupils' stages of fluency in English and this information gained is used well. Programmes of work are given to class teachers and weekly records of progress are kept. This ensures that learning is taken forward even when the specialist support teacher is not in the school. Two other pupils who are fairly fluent, but still need to cope with abstract ideas and idiomatic expressions, are also supported and their achievement is good.
21. Many pupils have poor skills of listening and concentration, and a few have difficulty controlling their behaviour. These factors make the classes potentially difficult to handle. Behaviour throughout the school is good because of effective classroom management, supported by the vigilant support assistants who are quick to intervene when they spot a pupil losing interest. There were many examples of the supporting adult talking quietly to a pupil who was starting to lose concentration which usually brought their attention back to the task in hand. Many lessons are exciting which supports those who have poor skills of concentration. Teachers also

ensure that there is a variety of activities in lessons in order to maintain the interest of the class. Occasionally, the starting activity went on for too long and some pupils became bored and switched off.

22. ICT is taught well as a subject and it is also used well in many subjects to enhance the learning of the pupils. Staff have profited from their ICT training and the resources of the ICT suite are used to the full. This is now a strength of the provision whereas in the last inspection, it was a weakness.
23. The system for tracking the progress of individual pupils and then the using of the information to plan for the different needs in each classroom is being used well in English and mathematics. Science has been a recent focus of development and the same system is used and is starting to ensure that tasks are appropriate to move the learning forward for all groups of pupils. As the information has only been available fairly recently, it is not used as successfully in other lessons and there were some examples where higher-attaining pupils could be further challenged. Teachers are very keen on this new approach as it gives them very useful information about the progress their pupils are making.
24. In a quarter of the lessons, learning was very good or better. In these lessons, the teaching was lively, every pupil was engaged, a variety of tasks were planned that were carefully designed to build up learning and the teachers had very high expectations of their pupils. There were many examples of this across the school. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the start was bright, cheerful and positive so the pupils were alert and interested. The activities were varied and the challenge increased so that all pupils' learning was extended. The teacher's enthusiasm for the story was infectious and her teaching involved every pupil in the class. When pupils went into groups to work, the instructions were very clear so each child knew what to do. Pupils achieved very highly in this lesson. Similarly, in a French lesson, the teacher's lively style, thoughtful planning and wide range of challenging activities, ensured that all pupils achieved highly.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory as the requirements for religious education are not met. The breadth of curricular opportunities is adequate and there are opportunities for enrichment. The school's accommodation and resources are of good quality and this helps pupils to achieve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson planning and schemes of work promote breadth and balance in the curriculum.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good and aids the pupils' development.
- Opportunities are missed to support pupils' development of literacy and numeracy skills through subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not fully met.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs supports good achievement.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils needs to be more fully developed.
- The learning support assistants work well to support pupils and teachers.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage – the children in the nursery and reception classes – meets their needs. The school has made careful use of pupils' assessment data to ensure that the lesson planning for English and mathematics provides well for most pupils' needs. Adaptations to the approaches recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, such as providing separate teaching time for reading activities, are now helping to raise standards in these subjects. At the time of the inspection, the school was not meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, which it believes to be inappropriate for its pupils. It is, however, in the course of adopting a neighbouring authority's locally agreed syllabus, which it meets in full.

26. The school has reduced an undue emphasis on literacy and numeracy in Years 2 and 6 in order to broaden the curriculum for these pupils. The effect of this has been to provide a more rounded education, but many of the pupils have special educational needs and their lack of basic skills is restricting their progress. It is necessary now to review the planning of work across the whole curriculum to ensure that the literacy and numeracy needs of all pupils are met in subjects other than English and mathematics, throughout the school.
27. The school provides satisfactory enrichment through its programme of extra-curricular experiences for all pupils, such as the breakfast club, drama, dance, art, numeracy and sports activities. French is taught to the older pupils. Pupils have opportunities to participate in sports activities involving other schools. Members of the local community make a significant contribution to the curriculum, by helping with sewing lessons and giving talks to pupils, on subjects such as Poppy Day. This involvement in the school's curriculum by parents, community members and governors supports the development of pupils' life skills. Pupils make the most of these opportunities.
28. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and aids the pupils' development well. The school prepares pupils effectively for the next stages in education. The induction into the reception class is good and staff are working on improving the transition between the reception class and Year 1. The nursery staff visit children and their families in their homes in order to establish positive relationships.
29. The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs, who achieve satisfactorily overall, but are starting to achieve well. Class teachers are closely involved in the writing, implementation and evaluation of individual education plans for these pupils. Pupils benefit from one-to-one support and group work led by the learning support assistant, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teacher. These pupils are involved in reviewing their own progress. These approaches have ensured that they are included well within their classes and receive good, individual support, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has assessed and identified pupils with particular gifts and talents, and has begun planning to take account of the specific needs of these pupils. This is mainly in English and mathematics, but is being extended to other areas.
30. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive a broad and balanced curriculum. There are many notices and signs in other languages and Year 6 are taught French. This gives pupils a strong message that pupils' home languages are valued. There are displays of pictures, musical instruments, books and posters about Black African and Caribbean heritage. Books about famous Black people such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Mary Seacole gives self esteem to its Black pupils and highlights the multi-cultural nature of British society.
31. The school has sufficient numbers of teachers and learning support assistants to enable it to organise classes effectively. The school's accommodation is good and includes specialist, well-resourced areas for information and communication technology and a good-sized hall for physical education and music. Subject leaders have worked hard to ensure that all subjects are well resourced and pupils learn better because they do not have to share or do without the resources they need.
32. The administrative and clerical staff and the learning support assistants are deployed very effectively and support the teachers well to ensure that they can concentrate on their primary roles. The caretaking and cleaning staff work effectively to ensure that the school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and attractive.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for well in a supportive environment and their views about the school are sought and acted upon. They receive sound advice for their academic and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes account of pupils' views in a systematic way.
- The provision for pupils' care and welfare is thorough and sensitive.
- The school's thorough management of health and safety arrangements ensures that pupils and staff are secure.
- Induction of pupils, and their progress through school, are managed well.

Commentary

33. Pupils' opinions are heard very effectively through a strong school pupil council which is informed and cascaded through each class's council. The school council meets frequently, represents all years and is well supported and guided by a teacher. It covers topics relevant to pupils such as school uniform, healthy food, and safety. The school also surveys pupil views and uses circle time – a session in which pupils talk about their personal development - well. Nearly all pupils feel there is an adult they could turn to in case of trouble.
34. The school, through its well organised arrangements (such as for child protection, looking after pupils in public care, use of healthcare experts and risk assessments for visits), ensures that the care and welfare of pupils and staff is well managed. It uses the resources of other agencies well to supplement its own activities. The Healthy Schools Award was granted recently and this is reflected in the lunch menus. Staff run a breakfast club which is attended by approximately 10 per cent of children. All necessary policies are in place, and are up to date and staff are fully aware of required procedures. On a day-to-day basis, the staff are caring of the pupils and this results in them trusting the adults in the school when they have problems. Pupils also help at lunch and breaks by being "playground friends". Parents feel satisfied that the school takes good care of their children – as do the pupils. Access for physically disabled people is not fully possible with current facilities except by moving classes around should a need arise.
35. Before children join the nursery they are visited at home and arrangements for school life are discussed with parents or carers. When they start in the nursery, a welcome meeting is held for parents to explain the curriculum, rules and processes of the school. The start dates are staggered to ensure children are not overwhelmed by the new experiences. As pupils progress through the school, teachers "hand over" to each other comprehensive details of each pupil's work and personal development. Pupils who join the school during the school year meet the headteacher with their parents, tour the school and meet their teachers and other pupils. On arrival they will be "buddied" with another pupil to help them settle in.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership arrangements with parents are good. Links with the community are good and links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from the way in which the school makes use of its community links.
- Parents consider the school performs well and provide good support to it.

Commentary

36. The school benefits from its links with several secondary schools for subjects such as science, arts, design and technology and sports. Pupils visit these schools for lessons or to attend events, and pupils from the secondary schools visit Gravel Hill. Secondary teachers visit the school to help with subject teaching. These close links and the contact that occurs for the older pupils in the school help their transfer to secondary schools since they are more familiar with the pupils and facilities in them.
37. Transfer of pupils to these secondary schools is handled satisfactorily. Teachers meet to hand over pupils' records and discuss their needs. Secondary school teachers visit to meet pupils and pupils have "taster" days at the senior schools. The local special school appreciates the benefits their school derives from the link, and its staff support Gravel Hill in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.
38. The school uses its community links well to add to pupils' learning in their various subjects as well as supporting their personal development. Visitors to the school include police and fire services, local clergy and professional sports clubs. A wide range of visits focus on specific topics and subjects. For example, trips are related to history projects on Tudor England and also work on the environment. Local businesses have responded to pupils requests by providing sponsorship for development of a garden and wildlife area at the school.
39. Parents comment very favourably about the school, praising all aspects of its performance but especially induction arrangements and the range of activities that their children appreciate. They feel well informed by communications about the daily life of the school and changes to arrangements. The school makes every effort to involve the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language in all school activities.
40. The school has created a satisfactory web site. A substantial number of parents work with the school supporting lessons, building story sacks, helping with support on trips, as well as at fairs and events. The parents' association is active and is widening its contacts by developing into a "Friends of the School".

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management satisfactory as there are many new systems that are beginning to raise standards. Governors know the school well and are starting to develop an approach to extend their role. Their work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy is good.
- Information about the school's performance is used very well to set priorities for improvement.
- Leadership of English, mathematics and science is good.
- Subject leaders are clear about their roles and monitor regularly.
- Staff work effectively as a team.
- Governors have reviewed their work and have an action plan to develop it further.

Commentary

41. The headteacher and deputy have been in post for about a year and a half. They have reviewed the management systems of the school with a view to refining and developing them in order to ensure that standards are as high as possible. This review has resulted in a very clear direction for the school that is supported by good, well focused professional development. The headteacher has a quiet, yet strong presence around the school that has a

- positive effect on the ethos. The leadership style is one that involves all adults, and a result of this is good team work amongst the staff that supports the effective environment of the school.
42. The new systems are already starting to have an impact. Attendance was poor, but last year it improved significantly. Parents were involved in this and at the parents' meeting there was a strong feeling that attendance was a key priority for the school. A review of the curriculum to make it more balanced, particularly in the older classes, and the monitoring of teaching and learning have led to greater consistency and have already raised achievement. The system of tracking the progress of pupils has led to more focused teaching in English and mathematics and is beginning to improve teaching in science. Performance in science has been erratic for some time, but the focus on the subject has improved teaching and learning across the school, and pupils are beginning to achieve well.
 43. New subject leaders have attended courses to support their work and they are helped by thoughtful guidance, for example, the format for their action plans which has clear headings to focus ideas. Each subject leader has reviewed provision in their subject and produced a good action plan. They monitor the work in all classes through analysing pupils' work, looking at planning and in the case of English and mathematics, of going in to classrooms to support and advise. These systems are supporting their knowledge of the provision in their subjects and the subject leaders are starting to use this knowledge well to raise the quality of the provision.
 44. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good. The policy on special needs is recently updated and comprehensive. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports teachers in writing their individual education programmes for pupils and undertakes regular reviews of pupils' progress. Records are up-to-date and well organised. All the appropriate procedures are followed and there is good liaison with outside agencies. The designated special needs governor joins in the monitoring of work in classrooms and maintains a close contact with the co-ordinator.
 45. The special educational needs co-ordinator also oversees the provision for gifted and talented pupils. The co-ordinator, monitors their progress and helps to find enrichment activities to help them to progress especially with their thinking skills.
 46. Governors have reviewed their role as they are aware that they need to become more involved in the leadership of the school. As a result of this review, they have taken responsibility for monitoring an area of school life, guided by the school improvement plan. Two governors have visited the school and written reports on their visits. They have questioned leaders appropriately from the context of a non-professional which has helped the leaders to think about what they are doing. They appropriately plan to extend their involvement starting this term.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	667,082
Total expenditure	667,927
Expenditure per pupil	3064

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,637
Balance carried forward to the next	32,792

47. The management of the school's finances is good. All the necessary controls are in place, and the school has received a positive audit report. Governors' expertise (assisted by the headteacher), and the efficient work of the administrative staff, ensure that the school makes

good use of its resources. Special needs funding is spent appropriately. The principles of best value are applied well.

48. Income and expenditure per pupil are around the national average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in terms of academic development and well in their personal development, and so the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. The provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** but good in knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement of most children is satisfactory as a result of sound teaching.
50. The attainment of children joining the nursery and reception classes is below average and the attainment of many boys on entry is well below average. Children make satisfactory progress throughout their time in the Foundation Stage and standards are below average when they enter Year 1.
51. Teaching in the reception class in all the areas of learning is consistently good and is satisfactory in the nursery. Staff plan all areas of learning well and children receive many opportunities to learn in adult led and children's self-chosen activities. The learning support assistants provide good support and this improves children's learning opportunities. Parents regularly help in lessons and this extends learning. However, because of inappropriately challenging activities in the nursery, some opportunities are missed to develop children's knowledge and understanding in areas such as mathematical development and communication, language and literacy.
52. The curriculum offered is broad and balanced, and gives children a satisfactory start to their education. There are no children at early stages of acquiring English. Children whose mother tongue is not English are as fluent as their English-speaking peers. Children who have special education needs receive support from learning support assistants and their achievement is satisfactory. Children from ethnic minorities achieve as well as their peers. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
53. Assessment procedures are good but are not used well to track the individual progress of each child. Staff visit children in their homes before they start school. This enables them to make good initial assessments of children's needs. Parents are given good opportunities to visit the school before their children start school. The curriculum in the outdoor areas is developed satisfactorily and enriches children's experiences. The resources are well used.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are good.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning.
- Children in the nursery are not always encouraged to talk about their learning or themselves.

Commentary

54. Children settle down quickly into school routines. The quality of the curriculum and the staff's good knowledge of the needs of young children ensure success in developing the children's interest in their activities and their ability to sustain concentration. Children share resources, take turns and respect each other and play together as was seen in all activities. They work collaboratively in sand, water and when they bake biscuits.

55. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The approach to behaviour management is positive. Most children are attentive and eager to learn, and find it easy to conform to the appropriate standards of behaviour set by the staff. Children of different backgrounds work and play in harmony. Children are appropriately active sometimes and at other times sit and concentrate as was seen in literacy and numeracy lessons in the reception class. However, some children lose concentration when work presented is too difficult as was seen in some lessons in the nursery. Also, opportunities are missed for them to extend their ideas through talking.
56. Children who have special education needs learn to concentrate and complete their activities with support from adults. Children's attainment is below average by the time they join Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning covers the area well.
- Adults work well together and provide a good model for the children.
- Achievement in the nursery is satisfactory but could be better.

Commentary

57. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and in the reception year is good so pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. When they leave the reception class, the poor skills of retention and of listening of many children slows down their learning so a few reach the goals that are expected but the majority do not. Standards are therefore below average on entry to Year 1.
58. Planning in the nursery and reception class covers all the areas of learning well. The procedures for assessment are good but are not always used to move the learning of children forward, Staff provide good opportunities for children to extend their speaking and listening skills in the reception class, and, in the nursery, to extend their listening skills. Where the provision is good, adults encourage children to extend their talk by asking them for further information. In the nursery, there are fewer opportunities for this to happen. One reason is that the inspection took place early in the year when many children were still settling so the focus was very much on their personal development through encouragement to sit still and listen. However, the opening activities went on for too long so that the children became restless, particularly those with poor skills of concentration and listening. Adults were happy to accept one word answers rather than encouraging children to give more information.
59. Most children listen well. The speaking skills of many are poor, but with encouragement, they learn to talk about themselves and higher-attaining children widen their vocabulary. Many listen well to stories and look at the book as it is being read and they learn that in English, writing goes from left to right. The book corner in the nursery does not have a high profile which may inhibit children from choosing books. During one observation, when it came to choosing, no child selected a book. Children learn that marks on paper convey meaning through good opportunities to write such as making lists.
60. Adults work well together. In a good lesson in the reception class, children extended their reading skills well when they looked at a big book of poems together. The teacher picked up a comment made by a child about sitting in her mum's pocket when little. She linked it to a poem, asking if the child was thinking of Lucy Locket. This was new to the child and interested her. The learning support assistant extended the children's language skills well by her thoughtful questions. In this lesson, the boys achieved as well as the girls because of the lively and motivating teaching.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children will not reach the expected goals, but achievement is satisfactory.
- Teachers have high expectations of children, but in the nursery, this sometimes results in work that is too demanding.

Commentary

61. Children have below expected levels of mathematical knowledge and understanding and the majority will not meet the expected level by the end of reception. Most have a knowledge of number to 20 and some beyond. Some can count on and back and help with counting the numbers present in class and calculate how many are absent. They know the names of simple shapes. They enjoy using the shop to purchase goods with coins. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. There is systematic and structured teaching which always provides practical opportunities for children to *learn by doing* and finding out for themselves and this allows the children to grasp the concepts well. Sometimes the opening activity in the nursery is beyond some children so they lose interest and motivation.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of resources supports learning well.
- Children receive sufficient opportunities to cook and observe changes in materials.

Commentary

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children's achievement is good. They learn about a variety of materials, and are able to select tools, and techniques when they make models using recyclable materials or construction toys. Good links are established with creative development when they feel different textured material and make a quilt for their teddy bears. They explore movement of wheels through running water. They keep a weather chart and are beginning to understand the changing weather.
63. Children bake biscuits and observe changes in materials and make three-dimensional puppets of animals as was seen in the reception class. However, opportunities to discuss changes in materials when baking biscuits were missed in the nursery. Children use computers and are confident using the mouse to click and drag objects. A wide range of practical activities supports learning well. However, because of weakness in their language skills, most children attain standards that are below expected levels by the time they join Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

64. This area was sampled. Children are given good opportunities to work with equipment to develop their skills of co-ordination. The outside area is used well by staff in the nursery so children have good opportunities to develop skills of co-ordination and to be aware of others when moving around.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

65. This area was also sampled. There are many good opportunities to take part in role play, to paint, to sing and to design and make objects using a range of materials. Children in the nursery were entranced when a teacher demonstrated a leaf print and many were eager to have a go themselves.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Leadership is good.
- Teaching is well planned and activities match the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Although achievement is satisfactory overall because of a dip in the last two years, achievement in lessons is good or very good.
- Effective marking helps pupils to improve their work.
- Reading records are insufficiently diagnostic to focus teaching effectively.
- Book areas in many classrooms are uninviting.

Commentary

66. Standards over the last two years have been low because of the very large number of pupils with special educational needs, many of them to do with home circumstances. Achievement overall has been satisfactory because of a dip caused by staffing problems in some of the classes. These have now been resolved. The predictions for the Year 6 class are that standards will still be well below average, but the high quality of teaching and learning and the good achievement because of this means that pupils are on track to reach below average standards by next summer.
67. Many pupils have poor skills of listening and do not have an extensive vocabulary on entry to Year 1. The careful and patient teaching that takes place in Years 1 and 2 encourages pupils to listen well and pupils begin to extend their vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils speak fluently and listen to the opinions of others. Many pupils have poor skills of retention but teachers are careful to repeat and go over work, so they achieve well. However, the vocabulary of these pupils is still not extensive and as a result, many have problems in framing their thoughts.
68. Reading is a focus for development throughout the school, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where standards have been stubbornly low. In these years, many pupils enjoy books when they are read to them and higher-attaining pupils learn to read confidently. Many pupils in both year groups, however, still need much support and do not use the full range of strategies to help make sense of the text. Many rely on phonics alone, which is not always helpful when reading English. They do not use the context of the text or the pictures to help them read. Teaching often focuses only on phonics and does not encourage pupils to use other strategies. The many records of reading give some guidance, but are not used diagnostically to show which strategies pupils need to develop. Also, many reading areas lack appeal as books are poorly displayed which does not invite pupils to read. The guided reading sessions have been redirected and take place for twenty minutes each day. These are well run and benefit pupils in all classes. Of particular help are the sessions when pupils in Year 6 listen to pupils in Year

2 read. They have been taught to ask questions of the Year 2 pupils that encourage them to focus on the text. This is good practice. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils are confident and fluent readers, able to discuss characters, plot in depth and are starting to think about how authors convey meaning. Many pupils do not have this proficiency but know how to choose a book from its blurb, the covers or by reading the first page. All know how to use reference books, the more proficient using alphabetic skills well to search the index.

69. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils use a wide range of well chosen vocabulary, vary the openings of paragraphs and write extensively. They show a good awareness of their audience and write fluently in a range of styles. Many pupils still do not have an extensive vocabulary which affects their ability to write fluently. Many pupils write colloquially and misspell words. However, the presentation of their work, which was an issue in the last inspection, has improved significantly. Writing has also been a focus of the school's work and some effective methods are raising the quality of writing. In a very successful Year 4 lesson, response partners – working in pairs to evaluate each others' work - led to a high quality of writing. Following discussion and drama based on a painting by Jons Hoefnagel, *A fête at Bermondsey*, pupils worked on whiteboards to draft their initial sentences. A mid-attaining boy wrote, *It was a cloudy summer's day and there was a smell that caught my ear. It was lovely bread.* His response partner, a low attaining girl wrote *I could smell tastley pies being served.* They discussed their writing seriously and amendments were made, including correction of spelling. Both learned very well from this approach.
70. Effective leadership, monitoring of the provision and feeding back to all staff has led to teaching that is good and in many cases, very good. Some of the characteristics of the teaching include opportunities to write in a range of genres for different audiences, self-evaluation by pupils, good match of tasks to extend all groups of pupils, methods to motivate boys, probing questions that encourage reflection, effective support for the less-able by the learning support assistants, high expectations, good use of resources, and good use of the technical language of the subject. The use of drama as part of teaching motivates pupils well and contributes very well to their learning and achievement. Some teachers write in front of the pupils so pupils see that it is a messy process and cannot be done well on the first attempt. This is very powerful teaching and promotes learning very well. Sometimes, pupils are not given the opportunity to draft their work before they begin which slows down their writing. Some, but not all, of the marking is very well considered to improve writing. Excellent comments from the teachers challenge the pupils to improve their work and some pupils respond in writing to what the teacher has written. Learning support assistants contribute very well to the learning of the many pupils with special educational needs; they plan with the teachers so they know exactly what they are expected to do. They support skilfully and unobtrusively, always alert to the pupils who do not have good attention or self control and step in quickly to intervene.
71. The teaching of English throughout the school is lively and motivating which is why pupils are achieving well in lessons. This has come about through effective leadership that has used the information from performance to adjust the teaching of the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Many pupils have poor skills of literacy that impede their progress in many subjects. Staff are aware of this and provide some opportunities for pupils to use their language skills in other subjects. Pupils are invited to read and to write letters to various organisations. Displays encourage pupils to read about what is happening in the news and there are opportunities to comment on photographs, guided by key questions. In history, pupils use skills of research and write about what they have found out. They are encouraged to read reference books in science. Many however, do not have the skills to interpret the information and staff are rightly planning to provide more opportunities to extend pupils' skills of literacy, for example by looking at how writing in history differs from writing in science and how to promote skills of reading across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

The school's provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematics is good and pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- Problem solving and opportunities for practical activities are given a high priority.
- Mathematics is well led and managed.
- Information from assessment is used well to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Opportunities are missed to revise work in order to help pupils to retain what they have learnt.

Commentary

73. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. Pupils of all abilities make steady progress. Higher-attaining pupils are extended by tasks that differ in the amount of challenge they present. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress as tasks are suitably modified in the light of their particular difficulties. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
74. Over the last two years, attainment in the national tests has been low. In 2003, the results of the national tests for Year 2 pupils were below average and for Year 6 pupils were well below average. Although national comparative data for 2004 was not available at the time of the inspection, standards are likely to be lower. Analysis of pupils' work for last year shows that standards were well below average at the end of Year 2 and low at the end of Year 6. These year groups had lower levels of prior attainment than the pupils in 2003, but some pupils did underachieve. The finding of the inspection is that good teaching is leading to improvement. The school has worked hard to improve standards in mathematics. Regular analysis of assessment data has identified areas that need additional focus. Assessment and tracking procedures are well developed and used well to inform levels of challenge and support for pupils. Basic numeracy is developed well in mathematics lessons. There is also an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' use of correct mathematical vocabulary.
75. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall and no lessons were unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils are enthused and motivated by the quality of the teaching and the opportunities for investigation and problem solving. In a very good Year 6 lesson on turning fractions into decimals, the teacher used a wide range of strategies to keep the pupils' interest and to make the concepts clear to all pupils, many of whom have special educational needs. Sound use is made of homework to reinforce and extend learning in school. Teachers are aware of the different ways in which pupils learn and use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. They have good subject knowledge. Although some pupils learn well, many pupils have poor skills of retention and so learning is satisfactory overall. Although well taught, they can quickly forget what they learned. More time needs to be spent on regular revision of mathematical processes.
76. The management of mathematics is good and effective monitoring procedures are in place. Teachers are reflective and keen to improve the standards of the pupils' work. Resources are good and used well to support learning. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and levels of achievement have been sustained. Even though attainment is lower, there has been satisfactory improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge as part of their work in other areas of the curriculum, but more work is needed because of the poor skills of

numeracy. They use graphs and tables to record data and in science they estimate and measure. The emphasis in mathematics lessons on the value of estimation, on pupils' applying their knowledge from one area of mathematics to another and on investigating and solving problems is a good grounding for the use of such skills in other curriculum areas.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are below expectations.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good across the school.
- Teachers are now placing good emphasis on teaching skills in investigative work.
- The subject leader provides effective leadership and manages the subject well.
- Areas of weakness in pupils' learning have been identified and are being improved.

Commentary

78. Pupils' standards of attainment in the current Year 6 and 2 are below the national average. The standards have fallen since the previous inspection when they were average. This is because less time was allocated to the subject in the past and little emphasis was placed on improving standards. The school has now audited the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, and is acting on the weaknesses, such as investigative work. As a result standards are improving throughout the school.
79. Pupils' achievement is now good and pupils make good progress from their starting points on entry into Year 1. However, achievement is satisfactory overall because of the low priority that science has had in the past. Year 2 pupils understand the concept of 'pull' and 'push' forces. In one very good lesson, they were learning the concept of 'fair testing' at a level appropriate to their ages. Year 6 pupils were finding out if changing the thickness of the wires could change the brightness of a bulb in a circuit. Their investigative skills are developing well. For example, they can make an appropriate hypothesis, record their work accurately and are beginning to communicate reasoned explanations of what they have done. However, all pupils carry out the same experiment and need adult support. Their skills in following an individual line of enquiry are not yet developed.
80. The attainment of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is similar to that of their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and achieve well. Pupils who have special educational needs receive appropriate support from adults so their achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
81. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good with some very good lessons seen. Lesson planning is effective. Teachers set clear learning objectives and pupils are aware of what is expected of them. They understand how the present lesson links to previous work. Pupils are managed well across the school. Their interest is maintained by careful questioning. In all lessons seen, resources were used very well for investigative work; for example, in a lesson on forces in Year 5, pupils used appropriate scientific equipment when they were finding out the effects of upthrust force in water and of gravity when the object is not in water.
82. However, teachers do not always place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary. They do not highlight scientific vocabulary in their explanations or require pupils to use it in their questions and answers. Work given to pupils of all abilities is similar and more-able pupils do not consistently receive work of appropriate level of difficulty. Pupils' skills in

entering and interpreting data do not receive appropriate attention. The depth of work in the past has been insufficient. For example only one or two pieces of work was completed in each area of science. The subject leader has identified these weakness and staff are tackling them well.

83. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The leader has a good view of the working of the subject across the school through effective monitoring of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' books. This has led to appropriate priorities for improvement. Assessment procedures are good. All assessment information is analysed but currently is not being used to track individual pupils' progress to improve standards. The school has maintained its good teaching and learning, leadership and management since the previous inspection. However, the standards have fallen but the school is on course to improve these.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Direct teaching of ICT skills is good.
- The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is developing well.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are not yet fully established.

Commentary

84. Good resourcing and good teaching are enabling all pupils to achieve well. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are broadly average. Since the last inspection, the resources for the subject have been improved and staff confidence and expertise have developed through training. Before this, problems with equipment and accommodation restricted the use of ICT. The development of a dedicated ICT suite, which is equipped with a projector and screen, and the purchase of fifteen notebook computers, all equipped with a very good range of learning programs for both younger and older pupils, mean that the school is well placed to move forward.
85. Pupils are achieving well from a low starting point. The older pupils had little access to good, up-to-date equipment until recently and are now taking full advantage of the improved facilities. They can create and edit documents, use ICT equipment for data logging and they are acquiring the skills needed for work on control and measurement. Many younger pupils had little experience of ICT equipment except for game playing and they too are responding well, developing sound keyboard skills and learning the basics of word processing.
86. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet to find and analyse information, and can access and utilise information in a variety of ways. Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show they are confident in accessing the Internet for research, recording numerical data and presenting text.
87. The direct teaching of ICT skills is good. The ICT classroom enables full class groups to see demonstrations on the large screen. In a good lesson with Year 4 pupils, the teacher's own specialist subject knowledge was used well to give clear succinct explanations and demonstrations using the digital projector. Good use of questioning helped to ensure that the pupils listened carefully and a brisk pace to the learning meant that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well. They learned to cut and paste text in order to improve a document and all were confident practitioners at the end of the lesson.

88. The use of national guidance as the basis for planning ensures that all pupils experience all aspects of the subject. The subject is managed well and the monitoring of work and teaching has begun. The teachers are gaining confidence in using ICT to enhance their own teaching and pupils' learning experiences, through professional development as well as support from the subject co-ordinator and the technician. Expectations for each year group need to be defined in order that concise pupil assessment systems can be used to build up a profile of each learner's strengths and areas for development more precisely.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

89. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Links with literacy and numeracy are stronger than those with other subjects. Now that the teachers are confident of their own skills, however, and they have the hardware and software to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum, there is growing use of it to support work in science and the humanities.

HUMANITIES

90. History and geography were sampled during the inspection, and there was insufficient evidence to evaluate their overall provision. From discussion with pupils about **history** and observation of two lessons, it is clear that pupils enjoy the subject and can talk about things that have happened in the past. Resources are used well, including bringing people in from the community to talk about their experiences. Pupils in Year 2 asked thoughtful questions of a representative from the British Legion. There are good links between literacy and history, as staff recognise that poor skills of literacy affect the ability to interpret information and to present findings.
91. It was not possible to see any **geography** lessons during the inspection. Younger pupils study the local area, looking at maps of Bexley Heath and identifying where significant landmarks are and where they live. Older pupils extend this knowledge of local geography and compare their locality with contrasting ones. The work demonstrates that many pupils have weak literacy skills which is making it hard for them to express their ideas clearly and fluently in their writing.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The locally agreed syllabus is not followed and as a result appropriate content is not covered.
- Pupils' achievement and attainment is unsatisfactory.
- Visits to places of interest contribute well to pupils' understanding of Christianity.

Commentary

92. Satisfactory provision and standards in the subject have not been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards in religious education are well below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 6. Planning indicates that Christianity is taught throughout the school. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they have little knowledge and understanding of the world religions required to be taught by the local Agreed Syllabus. Those pupils who belong to a religious group talk about their own religious practices but know little about other faiths. Weak skills of literacy impedes their progress.
93. Standards of Year 2 pupils are below expectations. They have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity and are beginning to learn about Judaism. They know the names of books that are special to different religions and understand the importance of, for example, the Torah for Jews, and the Bible for Christians. However, teaching, learning and curriculum coverage do not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

94. No religious education lessons were observed. One lesson identified as religious education on the timetable was on personal, social and health education. The inspection was at the beginning of the academic year and there was little work in pupils' books to ascertain the quality of teaching and learning and achievement. Teachers arrange visits to a church and a vicar is also invited to the school to talk about Christianity. This contributes well to learning.
95. The whole school planning for the subject does not meet the Agreed Syllabus requirements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

96. **Music** was sampled. The school is developing links with the local specialist school with performing arts status. Planning for the subject shows that the curriculum is covered well. In one lesson, pupils were confident to use musical instruments but had insufficient opportunities to experiment with sounds to create their own composition. In assemblies, pupils are taught about different composers, but poor skills of retention means that many do not always remember. Singing of well known choruses and other music is joyful and tuneful, but many lack confidence with new pieces. The reading skills of many are insufficient to read words on the overhead transparencies. Pupils are given opportunities to play instruments through a free taster year. However, very few take up the opportunity and of those who do, most cannot afford to continue after the first year so stop learning. The headteacher is looking for other ways to fund courses so that all have an equal chance to acquire skills of playing instruments.
97. One lesson was observed in **art and design**. Year 6 pupils were studying a portrait by David Hockney made from a collage of photographs. They understood the techniques he had used and were able to construct similar pictures of their own, matching materials and processes in order to do so. Elsewhere, there was evidence from around the school, in displays, that the pupils enjoy a varied provision and are able to experiment in a good range of media. They have worked with artists in residence and taken part in national projects. The work on display was often of an above average standard.
98. In the lesson observed, the teaching was of a high quality. The teacher had a very good understanding of the subject and motivated the pupils very well indeed, using a wide range of strategies to interest them and to help them to understand the material they were studying. Very good relationships and the judicious use of humour made learning enjoyable and the enthusiasm of the pupils for their task was clear and infectious. They worked very hard and with good understanding, achieving much in a relatively short time.
99. One **physical education** lesson was observed for Year 2, in which the teaching of games skills was satisfactory. The available evidence indicates that the teaching of physical education is good overall across the school, with special strengths in Year 6. Attainment is below average at the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. The school participates fully in local competitions and the pupils are often successful against pupils from neighbouring schools. Standards in games skills in Year 2 are below average, with the higher-attaining pupils showing good throwing and catching skills, but the majority of pupils fail to throw carefully and find catching difficult even at close quarters. Hand/eye co-ordination is below average and some boys find it hard to sustain concentrate and follow instructions. Older pupils can evaluate their own performance and that of others, and improve as a result of constructive criticism from peers as well as their teacher. The teacher in the lesson observed had good subject knowledge and used demonstration well.
100. The **design and technology** curriculum is covered well and pupils' standards throughout the school are in line with those found nationally. Pupils are given good opportunities to design and make moving toys using cams and to evaluate their end products. Pupils had opportunities to design and make fruit salad, biscuits, slippers and buggies. Photographic evidence indicates that the end products were of the expected quality for the pupils' ages. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well when they write instructions and record findings in tabular

form. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. No lessons were observed, so no judgements on the quality of provision and improvements since the previous inspection can be made.

101. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She monitors teachers' planning to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum and undertakes an analysis of pupils' work to ascertain standards. Her evaluations are used to develop additional strategies to further improve standards. Assessment arrangements are appropriate. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each unit.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

102. Two lessons were observed in personal, social and health education (PHSE) and so it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. The school's planned curriculum for teaching personal, social and health education is good. All teachers plan sessions carefully to support the needs of the pupils. PHSE is taught discretely as a subject linked to religious education and other subjects, as well as through assemblies.

103. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning were good in one and satisfactory in the other. One lesson was linked to ICT and pupils were learning about friendships. The teacher planned the lessons well, building on the previous learning and pupils were given good opportunities to discuss the friends of a character. The other was on healthy eating and pupils were designing menus for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The provision for helping pupils to develop a healthy life style is good. Pupils learn about good eating habits and importance of exercise in science lessons.

104. The school's good ethos and assemblies contribute positively to pupils' development as effective citizens, as well as to their personal and social education. Relationships in the school are good. The school has achieved Healthy School status and is planning to further extend the work.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	4
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	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	4

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