

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GUSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dover

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118687

Headteacher: Miss G A Waters

Lead inspector: Kevin Hodge

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 266938

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	118
School address:	Burgoyne Heights Guston Dover
Postcode:	CT15 5LR
Telephone number:	01304 206847
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend John W Philpott
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located in a semi-rural location near to Dover Castle and to a large army barracks. There are 118 pupils on roll and currently more boys than girls. Some classes have pupils from more than one year group. The numbers of pupils who start or leave other than at the normal times is very high, as about two thirds of pupils come from army families who can move at short notice. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, around 20 per cent, is just above the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well above average; one pupil has an educational statement. About 20 per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups- mainly Nepalese, and speak English as an additional language. The socio-economic background of the pupils varies, but is presently below average. The majority of the pupils live in the local area and few travel far to get to the school. The area has a mixture of owner-occupied houses and a significant proportion of families are in army dwellings. The pupils come to the school with a range of abilities but their attainment on entry to the Reception class this year is generally well below average.

The school gained the government's 'Healthy schools' award in 2004 and was awarded 'Investors in People' status in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and Communication Technology; Music; Physical Education; Special Educational Needs.
19677	Marion Cumbers	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23658	Stephen Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art and Design; Design and Technology; Personal, Social, and Health Education.
12764	Wendy Thomas	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Science; Geography; History; Religious Education; English as an Additional Language.

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>4</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>7</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Guston primary school provides a satisfactory standard of education** and satisfactory value for money. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in most subjects, but not all. The pupils in the Reception class achieve satisfactorily overall. The standard of care shown to the pupils is good. They behave well, enjoy school, and relate to all staff with respect. New pupils settle in quickly and feel welcome.

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

- Standards and achievement in writing are not high enough by the time pupils leave the school.
- The pupils achieve well in reading in Years 1 to 6.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The social and moral development of the pupils is good.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 and 2.
- The pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are not given help quickly enough.
- The pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) achieve well and the work is co-ordinated effectively.
- The school improvement plan covers just one year, which limits longer term planning.
- The headteacher, governors and staff develop a caring ethos throughout the school.

There were several issues from the last inspection and the school has addressed them appropriately. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been improved and is now matched to national guidelines and the level of resources improved. The higher attaining pupils are identified and activities for them are generally better planned than at the last inspection, although not in writing activities, for example. The best improvements relate to the resources for ICT.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**The pupils achieve satisfactorily overall**, given their starting point, which is well below average when they enter the school. In the Foundation Stage, the pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory, given their low starting point, although few children are currently on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in their reading and their ICT work and satisfactorily in other subjects. In Years 3 to 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are generally below those expected. The pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils throughout the school do not achieve well enough in their writing. Activities promote numeracy and ICT skills satisfactorily in other subjects although the pupils' writing skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum.

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

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

In the national tests for 2003 for the oldest pupils, results are consistently low. In 2001 and 2002, the results compared to all schools were in the lowest five per cent nationally. However, these figures should be treated with caution. The very high mobility of pupils means that very few pupils

have been at the school for a significant length of time. A high percentage of pupils have changed school six or seven times, for example. The local education authority (LEA) figures indicate that the oldest pupils make at least the average amount of progress from Year 2 to 6, but these are not reflected in the grades above. The pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily in nearly all areas, but some at the early stages of learning English do not get educational support quickly enough, which slows their progress and achievement. The pupils who have SEN achieve well throughout the school.

**The pupils' personal qualities are developed effectively. Their moral and social development is good.** The pupils behave well and, given that many arrive at different times or at short notice, they respond positively to the staff and each other. The school develops the pupils' social and moral awareness effectively. The attendance of the pupils is below the national average. This is primarily caused by the specific context of the school, when some holidays have to be taken by army families in term time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall.**

Teaching is consistently sound throughout the school. In nearly half the lessons, teaching was good and included three very good lessons. The teachers plan well and create a secure ethos that helps the pupils achieve satisfactorily in nearly all areas. The improved provision and use of ICT by the teachers is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. In the Reception class, teaching is satisfactory. Some good teaching in Years 1 to 3 is helping pupils make quicker progress, particularly in mathematics and ICT work. In Year 1 and Year 6, some very good teaching promoted pupils' learning very well. There are some weaknesses. The pupils do not achieve well enough in their writing and activities opportunities to develop their skills are not promoted well enough through other subjects. The school has highlighted this area in its improvement planning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is enhanced with French teaching and clubs at lunchtime or after school. The planning for pupils with English as an additional language does not always include work for those pupils at an early stage of learning English. There are good levels of care and nearly all pupils are included well within activities. The school's accommodation is good and has very good features such as the attractive playing field. The level of resources is good. This contributes to the quality of the pupils' learning and their achievement. The links with parents are good overall and the school develops links with other schools well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall.** The governors provide satisfactory support. The headteacher provides secure, caring leadership. Special needs work is co-ordinated well. The school has not developed its monitoring of teaching and learning rigorously enough and the school's improvement plan is too short term. This limits strategic planning beyond what is achievable in one year. The governors support and challenge the work of the school appropriately and the chair of governors works well with the headteacher. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements.

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

Parents are supportive of the school. The response from the parents' meeting and from questionnaires was very positive and spoke highly of the care and concern shown to pupils. Parents commented upon the sensitive way that the school handled difficult situations. Pupils also enjoy being in the school and appreciated the way they were welcomed. The older pupils commented favourably upon the musical plays that the school recently performed.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards of writing throughout the school.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously to raise standards still further.
- Improve the support for the pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- Improve school improvement planning by extending its vision beyond one year.

The school has identified some of these issues in its self-evaluation and plans for improvement.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The pupils generally achieve satisfactorily, but do not reach the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. The pupils in the Reception class make satisfactory gains in their learning but few are currently on course to reach the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age nationally.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in ICT in Years 1 to 3.
- Writing skills are weak throughout the school.
- Pupils' reading skills develop well through the school.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are not given help quickly enough.

#### Commentary

1. Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school as well as how well they do in lessons. Children are of well below average ability when they join the school. They make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily, but few are currently in line to reach the expected Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class.

2. The tables below show the average points scores attained in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests in 2003 (with the 2002 scores in brackets). One point represents roughly one term's progress, so the tables show, for example, that pupils in Year 6 were around three terms behind pupils nationally in all three subject areas. Others joining the school at other than the normal times also have a mixed level of attainment on entry. These factors have a marked effect on overall standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	11.1 (11.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	8.8 (10.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.8 (12.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The evidence from past test scores in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are consistently low. The trend in results has not kept pace with the rate seen nationally. These figures must be treated with caution, however, due to the high mobility rate of pupils and their very low starting point. Work seen in the inspection showed broadly average standards in reading and mathematics, but writing skills were well below average. In the other subjects inspected, the pupils reached average standards. Given their very low starting point, this represents satisfactory achievement. In their ICT work, the pupils achieve particularly well, helped by good teaching and level of resources.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
English	23.6 (21.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.6 (20.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	25.6 (21.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. In the Year 6 tests, standards have remained below the national average, and low compared to similar schools. It is not unusual for results to vary quite widely from year to year in a small school like this one, where the performance of just one or two children can have a significant effect on the school's overall statistics. This is further complicated by the high mobility rate of pupils that means very few pupils have been in the school for a significant amount of time. The LEAs information about the relative progress that the pupils make from Year 2 to Year 6 indicates that they make average progress over time.

5. Work seen indicates that standards in the present Year 6 are below average in writing, mathematics and science. No judgement is possible in ICT, but work seen in other subjects was of the appropriate standard. In reading, the pupils reach the expected standards. This represents good achievement, given the pupils' low starting point, and high mobility levels. In other subjects, where judgements were possible, the pupils broadly reach the standards expected nationally. This represents good achievement in subjects such as physical education and history, for example.

6. The pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily in most lessons, but are not always stretched; in English, for example, where writing is a weakness. The pupils with English as an additional language generally achieve satisfactorily, but those at the early stages of learning English do not achieve well enough. Standards, overall, are broadly similar to those reported in the last inspection. This represents satisfactory improvement.

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

Pupil attitudes and values, behaviour and personal qualities develop well, and are **good** overall. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Extenuating circumstances account in part for below average attendance. Provision for moral and social development is **good**.

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

- Incidences of bullying and harassment are dealt with thoroughly.
- Good induction procedures ensure pupils settle in as quickly as possible.
- The rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average.
- New pupils are made to feel welcomed by the school community.
- The social and moral development of the pupils is good.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/03**

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
School data	7.4	School data	1.1
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.*

7. Most pupils come to school regularly and on time. They go into their classrooms as soon as they arrive and begin the day enthusiastically, getting straight down to prepared activities with background music designed to encourage a calm start to the day. The induction process for new children, particularly the children entering the Reception class, is very good. The pupils' lower than average abilities are recognised by the school and few pupils will currently reach the nationally recognised Early Learning Goals in their personal development.

8. Absences are followed up swiftly, and records of reasons are carefully kept. Comparatively high rates of absence reflect mitigating circumstances. Parents are asked not to take their children out of school in term time. However, the school treats holidays and occasional absences in term time pragmatically. Families are unable to arrange army leave to coincide with school holidays and parents sometimes come home without warning. Some pupils are also taken out of school for extended visits to their homes abroad when families get the opportunity. A few children with challenging medical problems also increase absence figures.

9. The rate of pupil mobility is high. Only two pupils in Year 6 started at the school in the Reception class. This causes some difficulty as pupils settle in. The school welcomes newcomers however, allocating a 'buddy' to help them settle quickly. Because all the pupils come from different areas there is no 'Guston accent', so nobody is treated as being 'different'. The number of exclusions indicated below appears high. This was almost entirely due to one child however, who now attends a specialist school.

***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	75	25	0

10. The pupils' moral and social development are promoted well. There is a school council that the children value, and both parents and pupils agree that behaviour is good. What little bullying occurs is quickly sorted out. There were a high number of exclusions, but these involved just three boys who had particular difficulties and has now been resolved. Pupils take their responsibilities as citizens seriously. They keep their school neat and tidy and are open and friendly. They have a strong sense of fair play and respect for the feelings of others. They give their opinions with a confidence, which increases as they 'grow together in self esteem', which is one of the aims of the school. Assemblies provide good opportunities for the school to share its common aims and the pupils contribute to them readily by asking questions, operating audiovisual equipment and by providing musical accompaniment. The pupils' cultural development is aided by trips to local historic sites such as the castle and there are links with several European schools. One teacher will shortly be involved in an exchange with a colleague from a Swedish partner school. The pupils' multicultural awareness is developed satisfactorily, and the school actively welcomes pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory overall**. The curriculum generally provides a secure framework for teachers to plan and gives a step by step structure for learning. Local visits, links with other schools and musical activities enriches the pupils' learning. Extra-curricular provision is good. Teaching is satisfactory overall and has strengths in some year groups that particularly help pupils' learning.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils' learning, including that of pupils with SEN is good. The pupils are generally well motivated and in the most effective lessons, they are keen to learn and make progress. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which enables them to plan interesting activities that motivate pupils.
- Relationships are good and adults are good role models for pupils.
- Work for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is not well planned.
- Marking of pupils' work varies in quality.
- The use of assessment information is satisfactory, but has weaknesses.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3	8	14	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.*

11. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In over a third of the lessons seen, teaching was good and, in three lessons, teaching was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen although in two lessons, the mixture of strengths and weakness of the teaching were finely balanced. Good teaching was observed in all year groups and in different curriculum areas.

12. In the best lessons, teachers had good levels of subject knowledge and planned lessons well to provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and improve their learning. Teachers use challenging questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They gave clear instructions and explanations and allowed pupils time to explore new ideas and practise their skills. Teaching assistants were well deployed and made an effective contribution to pupils' learning. In the Reception class, the temporary teacher has only been in post for a short time and is still getting to know the needs of the pupils. The class assistant, who is also new, is well deployed, but the level of help is barely adequate for the range of needs in the class.

13. In a very successful English lesson in Year 6, the activities set provided a good level of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Resources were used very effectively to demonstrate strong and weak examples of newspaper headlines. Pupils were very engaged by this and were then able to use the techniques in their own writing. In a very good physical education lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teaching promoted good learning, developed the pupils' confidence and challenged them to improve.

14. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory, teachers showed secure subject knowledge, but activities were not always planned well to cater for pupils with different levels of attainment. In a religious education lesson, for example, the task set involved pupils in writing. As the pupils had

very weak writing skills, their concentration focused on the writing and distracted them from the religious education learning that the teacher intended. When marking pupils' work, teachers do not always give pupils specific guidance as to what they need to do to improve. There were some good examples, but generally marking is inconsistent. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop appropriately in other subjects such as history, and the staff make good use of interactive whiteboards, where available, to enhance their teaching. This motivates the pupils.

15. Pupils' learning is generally good, though in some areas involving their writing skills, learning is unsatisfactory. The pupils listen attentively and try hard to give well-considered responses to the questions they are asked. They make good efforts to describe and explain their learning. In the best lessons they are given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. They often share ideas and help one another to understand their tasks. When teaching is no more than satisfactory, learning is less effective. In these lessons, pupils are not always appropriately challenged and some are not motivated to work hard. The work for the pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is not planned sufficiently well and pupils are left too long before they are helped. The management of the pupils is generally good and this helps the pupils to learn at a quicker pace. In some lessons where the tasks set are too repetitive, the pupils can become restless.

16. The school has worked hard to improve assessment procedures. Assessments are now carried out regularly in the core subjects and in religious education. The school now has good information about pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. This data is used to predict outcomes in national tests. Co-ordinators are beginning to analyse test results to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to use the data to plan further work, but staff are still at the early stages of using the information to set individual targets and plan specific activities for their pupils.

## THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is well resourced and extended effectively through out-of-class activities and developing links with other schools.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is varied and stimulating.
- Resources are good.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to learning.
- Planning for the pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is weak.

### Commentary

17. The curriculum meets requirements and is broad and balanced. Planning for all subjects now follows official recommendations and guidelines, and this has corrected a weakness noted in the previous inspection. It ensures that pupils make sound progress from year to year so they are ready to move on to secondary education. Planning on a two-year cycle ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work. The links between subjects are a good feature, stimulating interest and strengthening understanding while making good use of teaching time. Opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and ICT skills are clearly planned into other subjects. However, not enough is done to develop writing skills. Too often pupils of all abilities are given the same simple worksheet, with little challenge to read or write at the level expected for their age in the subjects concerned. A good programme for personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and citizenship has been developed, taught partly as a separate subject, but also well integrated into other subjects and the wider life of the school.

18. The wide ranging programme of visits, visitors and special events is a good feature. These activities are used well to widen pupils' experience and stimulate their interest, for instance in other cultures through an 'Africa Day' and in the work of Shakespeare through a theatre visit. Pupils generally achieve well in work that follows, such as their detailed accounts of visits to museums. Staff and teaching assistants organise a good range of clubs and activities through the year to cater for such interests as gardening, music, football, crafts and school magazine production. There is also an after-school club. These activities are popular with boys and girls of all ages, boosting their interest in school. There are a number of developing links with other schools in other subjects.

19. Satisfactory care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. It is a significant advantage for pupils with English as an additional language that the school has employed a teaching assistant who speaks their mother tongue. However, it is a weakness that there is no programme of instruction or resources for those at an early stage of learning English. There is good provision for pupils with SEN. The targets in their individual education plans are clearly focused and regularly adjusted as their needs change. Gifted and talented pupils are identified but no specific provision is made for them. The pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are not always planned for effectively as they need more direct help.

20. Staffing levels are satisfactory, with additional staff used well to divide the large Year 4 and 5 class into two ability sets for numeracy and literacy lessons. Teaching assistants work well with teachers as a team and give good support, mainly to pupils with lower attainment, during lessons and through the school day. However, the Reception class has no teaching assistant suitably trained for children of this age and the level of staffing in the Reception class is low.

21. The school's accommodation and resources are good overall. There has been a significant improvement in ICT equipment, and this is used effectively in lessons. However, the outdoor play area lacks facilities and equipment, particularly to interest girls. The play area for Reception children is also short of equipment, though improvements are planned. The library has been improved and now offers a good range of fiction and non-fiction. Displays are used well to brighten the school and stimulate interest.

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

Arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**. The support and advice the pupils get is also **good** and the progress of the pupils is carefully monitored. The school sets great store on pastoral care.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Each pupil chooses a member of staff as their 'special person' to whom they can go for help about anything that worries them.
- Pupils are well cared for and supported during difficulties, such as bereavements.
- The handbook is out of date, which limits its usefulness.

### **Commentary**

22. The welfare of the pupils is of prime concern to the school, and its caring ethos stands out. The environment is pleasant and well organised. The parents appreciate that in this 'lovely little school' their children are well known to all the staff and well cared for. Pupils, families, and the staff themselves were well supported and helped to cope with recent bereavements. The staff have also benefited from training about how children learn and develop emotionally. The staff can also be a 'special person' that any child can choose to share concerns and this works well according to the pupils.

23. Parents at their meeting and in their questionnaires said that the school is very good at settling children in. Induction procedures are low-key because pupils arrive throughout the school year. This high rate of mobility means being new is treated as a matter of course. The staff ensure that new pupils have the support they need from their peers. Newcomers are quickly provided with uniform and assessed so that no time is lost, making pupils feel part of the 'Guston family' as soon as possible. Parents confirm that their children are happy, enjoy coming to school and in many cases find new confidence and self-esteem. Each class has weekly sessions to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to be listened to, and there is a friendship support scheme.

24. All staff and a governor have attended training in child protection procedures, and the school finds that the system works well when needed. The staff have also been trained in the positive handling of cases of difficult behaviour. The school works co-operatively with parents when there are problems, sometimes using a home-school contract. The Army families' office is supportive and helps the school when needed and the educational welfare officer can be called upon when there are problems.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links and communication with parents are **good**. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's links with the local community are effective, as are those with other schools.
- Information provided for parents is thorough and clear.
- Progress reports are regular and help involve parents in their children's progress.
- The school arranges parent consultations flexibly so that as many as possible can attend.

### **Commentary**

25. Parents, at their meeting and in their questionnaires, were supportive and appreciative of the school. Nobody had experience of raising a complaint. They were particularly impressed by the care that the staff team takes of their children, and the ethos of the school. They feel welcome and confident that they can come in to the school whenever they want, and that they are kept well informed of their children's progress. Nepali parents appreciate the school employing a member of staff who can translate for them when necessary. Liaison with carers of pupils was also mentioned as particularly successful.

26. The 'Friends of Guston School' arrange social events that are well supported, but few parents help in school as volunteers. The school has arranged sessions for parents on language development and computing. These were partly successful, but only a comparatively small number of parents attended.

27. The school has good links with the various churches in the area, which are all represented on the governing body. There are also good links with other schools and the local playgroup. However, mobility, and the military and civilian administrative divide, holds back some of the new initiatives the school would like to put in place. The school is trying hard to be a uniting influence between the village of Guston and the local mixed army and civilian estate.

28. The school raises money for various charities and arranges many trips for the pupils, both locally and further afield, to broaden the pupils experience of the wider European and world community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is sound. Governors give satisfactory support and ensure the school meets its statutory requirements.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school improvement plan is clear and highlights appropriate areas to develop, but is too short term in its vision.
- The headteacher is a caring and supportive leader.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic, but their monitoring role of assessing teaching, learning and the standards the pupils reach is weak.
- The co-ordination of provision for the pupils with SEN is good.

### Commentary

29. The headteacher provides a caring and supportive influence within the school. She has clear commitment to on-going improvement. The priorities for development are clear, although the one year nature of the school improvement plan restricts the longer term vision for the school. There are some effective strategies to bring about improvement, although some of these are not sufficiently rigorous in assessing the critical areas of teaching and learning. Informal monitoring is good and the headteacher, supported by the senior teacher, has created a strong team ethos. This is mutually supportive throughout and is noticed by the pupils and parents. The teacher who is newly qualified is supported very well and any additional help is quickly provided.

30. The governors provide appropriate support. They do have some difficulties in retaining members, but this is due to the transient nature of some governors, such as the army chaplains, who may be posted elsewhere. They are supportive of the school and work hard to give the school expertise in finance and in helping to run the 'Friends of Guston School association'. The Chair of governors is very knowledgeable and has supported the school for many years. He provides a stable influence and has a good relationship with the headteacher and the school. The governors are generally aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, via headteacher's reports and discussions. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and her team. The governors' informal knowledge about day-to-day activities is good, but more formal monitoring of activities is less well developed.

31. The management of the school is satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, the management was described as good. The reasons for the apparent decline lie in two areas. For example, the priorities for development are mostly accurate, but planning is too short term and relies too much upon developing the ethos of the school rather than raising standards. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily from a very low starting point, but the school has not necessarily done all it can to compensate for these known factors. For example, the pupils who have English as an additional language do not always get timely help, and the staffing levels and expertise in the Reception class are limited, despite pupils having high levels of special need. Subject co-ordinators are keen and enthusiastic. However, they do not have sufficient impact upon raising pupils' achievement, as they have not fully focused on the essential elements that help improve it. There are some exceptions: the co-ordination of ICT and SEN are well led and managed. Information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordination has improved since the last inspection and there are significant improvements to the level of resources throughout. For pupils with SEN, good use is made of outside agencies where necessary and the support the pupils receive is well managed. There is clear recording of provision and deployment of teaching assistants. They are well briefed and effective in the classrooms. This helps pupils to achieve well. The management of English as an additional language is less effective as some pupils do not receive the early help they need when they are at the early stages of learning English. The school has some difficulty in improving the standards due to the high mobility of the pupils. This is a significant barrier to improvement and makes systematic improvement more difficult to address or plan.



## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	531,439.00
Total expenditure	354,974.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,169.00

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	92,903.00
Balance carried forward to the next	176,465.00

32. The school runs its finances efficiently. The accounts were audited some time ago and had few points to address. Significant funds were earmarked to improve areas of the school, such as the outside play areas for the Reception class, and for boundary fencing that has recently been renewed. The headteacher regularly gives governors information about how money is being spent and priorities are included in the school improvement plan. The governors oversee finances appropriately, and some principles of 'best value' are followed. However, the school's financial policy does not specifically address the audit commissions 'best value' principles and these are not systematically applied to spending decisions.

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

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

33. Children start school at the beginning of the year during which they are five. At the time of the inspection, all but one of the children attended full time. Children's attainment on entry to school varies from year to year but in the current Reception class, attainment is well below average in most of the areas of learning. A high proportion of the class has been identified as having difficulties with language and communication. Procedures for introducing children to school are good. In the term before they start school, children and their parents visit for one afternoon each week. This means that when they start school they are familiar with the staff and their surroundings. Parents are very appreciative of this opportunity. The present Reception class differs from the rest of the school in that the majority of children are not from army families and are likely to stay at the school for a longer period.

34. A key issue for action in the previous inspection was to provide a safe and secure outdoor learning area and to improve resources, particularly wheeled toys and large outdoor apparatus. The school has partially addressed this issue. There are now wheeled toys for the children and a safety surface is about to be laid so that large apparatus can be installed. The curriculum addresses most of the six areas of learning for the Foundations Stage appropriately. The quality of teaching and children's achievement are satisfactory overall. Staff regularly make observations of children's progress. However, these are not sharply focused on attainment, and information from observations is not yet used to plan further activities. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

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

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

- Adults have good relationships with children and provide good role models for them.
- Children's attainment in this area is well below average.
- Children have limited opportunities to make independent choices about their learning.

#### **Commentary**

35. Children in the Reception class have well below average skills in this area of learning. They like coming to school, but many find it difficult to join in with whole class activities. Their levels of concentration are low and many children find it difficult to settle to activities for any length of time. When not involved with an adult some children drift from one activity to another with little purpose. Planned activities provide satisfactory opportunities for children to play together, share and take turns, but many children still play alongside one another rather than together, which is characteristic of younger children. Some are still at the stage of observing others play, rather than joining in. A significant number are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is well below average.
- In some activities there are missed opportunities to develop children's language skills.

### Commentary

36. When they start school children's language skills are well below average. This means that only a small proportion are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. A high proportion of the class has been identified as having communication and language difficulties. This was evident during the inspection, as many children had immature speech and several children were reluctant to speak to visitors. Some tend to answer questions with single words and use nods and gestures to make their needs known to staff. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory overall, though adults often miss opportunities to develop children's language skills. Children enjoyed listening to the story of the 'The Gingerbread Man'. They were engaged by the idea that the gingerbread man had run away, and enjoyed making a 'wanted' poster. Some of the activities around this were more suited to children with better developed reading and writing skills. There were missed opportunities to develop children's reading skills, as the resources used were too small for all children to see clearly. Children's writing skills are well below average. Although a small number of children are at the early stages of writing recognisable letters, very few can write their names independently for example.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is well below average.
- Planned activities do not always provide enough opportunities to develop children's mathematical skills.

### Commentary

37. The majority of children are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals for mathematical development by the end of the year, but they are achieving satisfactorily overall. The quality of teaching in mathematical development is satisfactory overall. However, during the lessons there were few mathematical activities planned as the main teaching took place earlier in the week. Children can count to five and some beyond this, but few children reliably match objects to numbers as they count. There are missed opportunities to develop children's mathematical language. Children have poorly developed language skills and many are not sure of the words to describe position, such as 'behind' or 'in front of'. Planning includes mathematical activities but these are not always sufficient or integrated with other areas.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is well below average.

### **Commentary**

38. Children enjoy using computers and some are able to use the paint programme to draw pictures, although few children are currently on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in the provision of a range of activities that promote children's inquisitiveness and investigative skills, although there are plans to develop more.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is below average.
- The outdoor area has been developed since the last inspection, though there are still improvements needed.

### **Commentary**

39. When using large apparatus or wheeled toys, children are agile and confident. As yet, the outdoor climbing equipment has not been installed, but this is on order. Children have access to the climbing equipment in the hall for physical education lessons. Children's skills in using pencils, crayons and other small tools are less well developed. Children's hand control is not well developed and few children manage writing tools confidently. Whilst a small proportion of children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals for this aspect, most will not.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is well below average.

### **Commentary**

40. Few children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the Reception Year but they achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers used the outdoor playhouse to encourage children to act out the story of the gingerbread man. Adults model play for children, but whilst children respond to adults suggestions, they find it difficult to initiate the role-play. Children have opportunities to paint and draw, but as yet many of them have not developed good hand control and their pictures are below average for their age. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes. At times, there is a heavy emphasis on literacy skills and children's independent activities do not sufficiently support their creative development.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 (YEARS 1 TO 6)**

41. Unless otherwise indicated, the pupils with **SEN** achieve well. They are given good support, and the teaching assistants are skilful at supporting them. The pupils' progress is monitored well by the co-ordinator, and their progress assessed regularly. The school makes satisfactory provision to include pupils in activities and at the appropriate levels. In practice, this tends to be more effective in their social development than their academic progress. For example, a specialist-teaching assistant supports the pupils who have English as an additional language effectively in some activities. Help with gaining initial English skills is not as well developed however. In some activities, particularly in the introductions to lessons, this is less effective and little help is given to them.

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory except in aspects of writing.

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

- Standards in writing are too low throughout the school.
- Pupils make good progress in reading.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language need more structured provision.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning.

#### **Commentary**

42. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been very low each year since the previous inspection compared with schools nationally. Results in the Year 2 reading tests improved in 2004, when almost three quarters reached the expected level, but less than half reached that level in writing. The Year 6 results were also much weaker in writing, with only one pupil in five reaching the expected level. By contrast, almost three quarters reached the expected level in reading and one pupil reached the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good progress in reading and achieve well. Standards are below average in the present Year 2, but broadly average in Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are below average through the school, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. However, standards in writing are very low in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils do not make consistent progress and their achievement is unsatisfactory overall.

43. The range of attainment in each class is wide. Standards of attainment on entry are well below average. Most classes contain two year groups, including pupils at different stages of learning English as an additional language. Teachers do well in planning interesting lessons that encourage pupils to listen. However, some pupils lose attention during instruction if they are not actively involved in answering questions or making notes. By Year 2, most pupils take an active part in discussions, though their answers are generally brief. Some teachers coach individuals to speak clearly, and teaching assistants encourage shy pupils to join in. Year 6 pupils are confident in informal discussions, though most have difficulty in explaining their ideas at length in formal language. There is no scheme of work or assessment procedure to identify the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

44. By the end of Year 2, standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are generally weak. Spelling continues to be a weakness through the school, yet pupils make little use of dictionaries or word lists. A high level of adult support ensures that pupils succeed even if work is too hard, but many pupils come to depend on such help. Additionally, the curriculum is unbalanced, with too many grammar exercises and structured worksheets compared with too few longer pieces, such as stories. Skills learned in exercises are not carried over into independent

work. By the end of Year 6, many pupils write slowly and have difficulty in planning, drafting and checking their work independently. Nevertheless, there are some examples of good achievement in writing for a 'real' purpose, including letters by Year 2 last year, recent poetry in Year 3 and current work on news reporting in Year 6. In some instances, displays are used effectively to motivate pupils, and there are good examples of word-processing used to improve presentation and encourage careful editing. Procedures for assessing writing are inadequate. Individual needs are not identified in enough detail or regularly enough to ensure that pupils' progress is secure. In marking, teachers do well in giving encouragement, but do not routinely require pupils to learn from their mistakes by making corrections or doing further work.

45. Pupils achieve well in reading because their progress is closely monitored and books, instruction and support are well matched to their developing needs. Many parents give valuable help at home. Year 2 pupils have secure skills in sounding out unfamiliar words. Those with SEN or low attainment make satisfactory progress because they are given regular adult help and are withdrawn at times for intensive instruction using officially recommended programmes. Books are well promoted so pupils are keen on reading. Regular group discussions led by the teacher or assistant ensure full understanding. It is a good feature that those with higher attainment choose difficult books. By the end of Year 6, all pupils read silently and concentrate well. However, the school lacks specific resources and structured programmes for pupils in the early stages of English as an additional language. This weakness slows their progress, although teaching assistants do well to help them take part in lessons. Once they are beyond the early stages, their achievement is at least satisfactory.

46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. One very good lesson was seen, where the teacher very effectively boosted pupils' understanding of headlines and news reporting by encouraging them to criticise his own skilful examples. Information and communication technology (ICT) was used very effectively: for example, a lower attaining group co-operated well in scripting and producing a television news flash using a video camera. There is a positive atmosphere in most lessons and pupils work willingly. Teachers adjust tasks to some extent so that pupils of differing abilities work successfully, but expectations for the pace, accuracy and presentation of work are not consistently high enough.

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Book stocks have been improved since the previous inspection, with a good impact on standards. Extra staffing is used well to split the large Year 4 and 5 class into two ability groups for lessons. However, monitoring the provision is not related closely to pupils' standards. Notably, the weakness in writing has been identified, but this had not led to a clear strategy for improving standards through the school.

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

48. The library has a good range of information books and pupils have sound skills in using them. However, their weak writing skills limit their ability to express ideas, for instance in science and religious education. Through the school, pupils of all abilities are too often given the same simple worksheet, with a low level reading or writing activity. This helps lower attaining pupils, but over time, it limits the opportunities for others to plan and develop their own ideas in depth and detail. They achieve better results when given time to work up major pieces for display, such as the letters and reports written recently in science by Year 4 and 5.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school recognises the need to improve standards and is taking a number of steps to improve provision.
- Activities make good use of computers to help improve pupils' knowledge.
- The range of activities in Years 3 to 6 is narrow.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.

49. The school has rightly identified mathematics as an area for development, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Results in the 2004 National tests for Year 6 pupils dropped slightly from the previous year, when they were well below average, compared with both the national average and that for similar schools. However, caution should be taken when looking at these results. The small number of pupils, combined with high mobility has affected results over a long period. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 broadly meet standards expected nationally and they achieve well. This is due to good teaching and improved planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Although they do not reach the nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.

50. In the Year 1 and 2 class, the pupils' accuracy in basic addition and subtraction work is satisfactory. Their past work indicates that number activities are covered well and are usually recorded carefully. The school develops the pupils' knowledge of shapes and their properties well and pupils can describe the properties and identify differences between them. Pupils achieve well, given their low starting point when they enter the school although, by the end of Year 6, they do not reach the standards expected nationally.

51. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve less well, but satisfactory overall. The pupils have a secure grasp of number work and simple problem solving. Their knowledge is generally at a lower level than expected however. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are grouped according to ability for some lessons and this helps them to achieve satisfactorily, given their low starting point and frequent changes of school. In Year 6, the pupils know how to record data by different methods and plot their results. Discussions with the pupils and examination of their past work indicate that they cover basic number work appropriately and have competent skills, but this is generally at lower levels than expected.

52. The use of computers with the activities seen is a stronger feature of work in all year groups. Teachers consistently used the available computers and interactive white boards to good effect. This helps pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching was consistently good. The teachers in these year groups planned activities that motivated and challenged the pupils. In the Year 2 and 3 class, good use was made of technology to highlight the pupils' understanding of number work. In the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher's use of a hand puppet to teach the properties of shape was inventive and effective. The balance between direct teaching and allowing the pupils to work in groups was good. In Years 4 to 6 this is less evident and the activities chosen are not as well matched to the pupils' interests. This leads to pupils becoming competent in their basic skills, but not in developing their interest further. In a Year 6 activity on handling data, some follow on work did provide more challenging activities, although some pupils were not clear about its context. The range of activities covered so far this term tend to be largely limited to number work, partly to boost the pupils' skills, but tends not to motivate or challenge them further.

53. The co-ordination of the subject is not yet fully effective, although the action plan, developed by the co-ordinator is giving more direction to improvement. The co-ordinator has recognised the weaknesses in the pupils' skills and has analysed the latest test information. The lack of systematic monitoring of teaching is a weakness that the school recognises.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory, but has weaknesses. The pupils use number and data handling skills in other subjects. This goes some way to helping them to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills, but the range of skills is narrow. Pupils set out tables and simple graphs in science, for example, but this to a limited extent. Other simple skills of measuring are used in practical subjects such as design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are below those expected nationally.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily from a low starting point.
- Good use is made of ICT to record scientific data.
- The curriculum is planned well to take account of mixed age classes.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.

### Commentary

55. National test results in science at the end of Year 6 have remained below or well below average since the last inspection. However, high levels of mobility have affected results. In the last year, a number of pupils joined the class only a short time before the tests. Many pupils have weak writing skills and this makes it difficult for them to record what they understand. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about animals and their young. As this was the beginning of the topic, pupils were learning the names and labelling diagrams. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils planned and carried out their own investigations. Most pupils understand the principle of fair testing. They understand that they should only change one variable at a time. They were able to explain orally what they were doing, but many found it difficult to record their results. In Year 6, pupils used a computer programme competently to present the results of their investigations in charts and tables.

56. When children start school their knowledge and understanding of the world is well below average. As they progress through the school, teachers work hard at providing activities to support their scientific understanding and they make at least satisfactory progress. A small number make good progress.

57. The curriculum is planned so that the topics children in mixed age classes cover are not repeated. Teaching in science is satisfactory overall and one good lesson was seen. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan suitable activities to develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. In one lesson, there was a good emphasis on scientific vocabulary, which supported pupils' learning well. However, this was not evident in all lessons. Teachers are currently developing a more investigative approach to science. Pupils greatly enjoy this, but occasionally the lessons are structured so that pupils have too much time for free investigation. As a result, some of them lose concentration and become inattentive.

58. Science is satisfactorily led by the very well qualified co-ordinator. She is very enthusiastic about the subject and has successfully developed enjoyment of science. The regular 'science days' are a positive feature of this. She has worked hard to devise a curriculum programme to cater for mixed age groups whilst ensuring that pupils cover the statutory programmes of study. This needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that when topics are repeated, each year group studies them at the right level. At present, the monitoring of teaching and learning in science is



not rigorous enough. As pupils' writing skills are weak, scrutiny of their recorded work does not give an accurate picture of their knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator's action plan states that the subject should also be monitored through some observations of teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

59. There was just one direct ICT lesson taught during the inspection in the Year 2 and 3 class and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching or on provision. However, the pupils were observed developing their skills in other subjects, particularly mathematics and English. The pupils reach the expected levels in Years 1 and 2 and achieve well. It is not possible to give a secure judgement on the pupils' achievement in Years 4 to 6.

60. The pupils in Year 2 readily use word processing software competently on their laptop computers. They alter the appearance of words, such as *bridge* or *wave*, to look like the object they are describing. They are confident in using the features of the interactive whiteboard (IWB) when the teacher invites them to access menus, or drag icons on the screen. The pupils' learning was good as the teacher had very good subject knowledge and enthused them. The level of resources was good and the activity encouraged the pupils to learn new skills.

61. No direct teaching of ICT was observed in Years 4 to 6, although a number of activities were seen in other subjects such as English, mathematics and history. Little evidence was seen of pupils using control technology or programs. Discussions with them, along with analysis of past work, indicate that pupils gain appropriate skills in using word processing, spreadsheets and presentation programs. Other forms of ICT equipment, such as video cameras, are also used competently by the pupils.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

62. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory. Examples were seen of older pupils using spreadsheet programs in mathematics to work out sports scores and word processing features in English work. In science, they entered information to produce simple bar charts and younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 used computers to show pictures of animals and match them. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils used a web site effectively to research work on Ancient Greece. A video camera was also used in Year 6 to create an historical video diary.

## **HUMANITIES**

63. Only a small number of lessons were observed in **history** and **none in geography**. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection or inspected in depth. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good. The management of both subjects is effective and places an emphasis on the development of subject skills, with an increased use of cross-subject links.

64. History is planned to include cross-curricular themes. For example, although history was the topic, the skills being developed were mainly art and ICT. However, the pupils are developing their skills of historical enquiry satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 enjoyed learning about the life of a scribe's family in Ancient Egypt and contrasting this with their own lives. They were able to use an internet site to find information and paste text into a word document. Higher attaining pupils were able to make notes on the most significant points.

65. In the Year 4 and 5 class, the pupils were making masks based on Ancient Greek theatre. Although the focus of this lesson was more art than history, the pupils showed some knowledge of the characters they were representing. Year 6 pupils used a computer programme to make a presentation about the Greek myths they had studied. Different groups in turn worked at dramatic presentations of Greek myths and used video to record their work. The history curriculum is

enriched by visits to Dover Castle, and various museums. No **geography** lessons took place during the inspection, as the subject is taught separately and was not scheduled for this part of the term. No recorded work was available for analysis and therefore it is not possible to make a secure judgement on pupils' attainment or achievement. Teachers' planning shows that a satisfactory range of work is covered.

## Religious Education

66. Provision is **satisfactory**. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson. Further evidence was obtained from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Religious education is planned to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. There are good links with local Christian churches and clergy visit regularly. Pupils visit the local church for Harvest Festival, Mothering Sunday and the annual carol service. There are also links with other world faiths. A Muslim parent has visited to talk about her faith and older pupils have visited a synagogue in Ramsgate to learn about the Jewish faith. The school is planning a celebration of the forthcoming Hindu festival of Divali and is well supported in this by a group of Hindu parents.

67. The lesson observed was in Years 1 and 2. Pupils discussed the importance of saying sorry. The teacher related this well to the story of 'The prodigal son' and also to children's own experiences. In this lesson, pupils' attainment was in line with standards expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus.

68. No lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. There was very limited recorded work from these year groups and it is not possible to make a judgement on standards. The range of work covered meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. However, pupils' weak writing skills mean that it is difficult to judge their knowledge and understanding. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. It was possible to see only a limited range of work in art and design, design and technology, and musical activities were only observed in an assembly. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection. They were not inspected in depth and no firm overall judgement can be offered on provision.

70. In **art**, work on display showed sound achievement in drawing and painting in Years 2 and 6. Pupils now have the opportunity to work with clay, and this is an improvement on provision since the previous inspection. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Years 2 and 3 made good progress in moulding clay to imitate the designs of Ancient Egyptian funeral jars. Several pupils lacked confidence, particularly those with English as an additional language, but they reacted well to the strong encouragement of the teacher and assistant. Higher attaining pupils achieved very well because of the teacher's well-informed demonstrations and advice on technique.

71. In **design and technology**, the two lessons in Years 4 to 6 were well planned and resourced to develop pupils' skills. Teaching was very good in the Year 6 lesson, where pupils worked with great enthusiasm to make masks in the style of Ancient Greek theatre. The teacher and assistant showed considerable skill in demonstrating difficult techniques and great patience in helping pupils to solve design problems. Examples of past work by Year 6 show a sound understanding of ways of joining materials, and the best work is well finished. Pupils' project folders show that they meet expectations in planning projects, and some of their designs are well drawn. However, there are few examples of pupils' evaluating their work in detail and the use of standard worksheets for pupils of all abilities limits the challenge for those with the potential for higher attainment.

72. **Musical** activities were seen during an assembly, where a range of instruments such as glockenspiel and xylophones were used to accompany other children singing. These were good and enjoyed by the pupils. Other pupils spoke enthusiastically about some recent musical productions based upon Shakespeare's plays.

73. In **physical education**, the lessons observed were all indoors. The pupils reach the standards expected throughout in dance and gymnastic work and they achieve satisfactorily. In the Year 2 and 3 class, the pupils are confident in their movement and creative in developing ideas connected to fireworks. Good teaching promoted the pupils' enjoyment through good use of demonstrations by both the class teacher and by fellow pupils. In the Year 1 and 2 class, a very skilfully taught lesson encouraged pupils to develop their confidence and movements on apparatus. The teacher organised the activity well, reviewing previous learning well and paying very good attention to health and safety routines. In Years 4 and 5, the pupils developed their knowledge of dance and movement based upon a 'Greek' theme. The pupils warmed up well and were not self-conscious when performing in front of others. The teacher provided appropriate opportunities for pupils to comment upon their performance, although some pupils dwelt upon their failures rather than successes.

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

74. This curriculum area was sampled and no judgement can be made on provision in this area. The school has developed its own scheme of work to guide teachers in planning appropriate activities. The scheme is detailed and relevant to the pupils' interests and needs. Aspects of PSHE and citizenship are thoroughly covered through a combination of specific lessons, school assemblies, and topics in other subjects. Coverage also includes sex education and drug awareness. Staff create good opportunities for pupils to take initiatives in the wider life of the school. The school council gives a high level of challenge to selected pupils in discussing relevant issues and making decisions. Overall, provision makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and attitudes towards school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*