

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROYAL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sidcup, Kent

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101445

Headteacher: Miss P L Raffill

Lead inspector: Mr A Painter

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 267600

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	268
School address:	Riverside Road Sidcup Kent
Postcode:	DA14 4PX
Telephone number:	0208 300 7646
Fax number:	0208 309 6061
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Nurse
Date of previous inspection:	5 July 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community primary school has fallen in size over recent years as fewer pupils have joined each year and there have been local rumours of closure. This has led to a period of insecurity when it has been difficult to attract and retain pupils or staff. However, the most recent intake has been higher and the school remains above average size. Around four fifths of the pupils are from white backgrounds, while other pupils come from a range of cultural origins, with the largest group from Black African backgrounds. Very few pupils have home languages other than English with five at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils live in housing around the school, which has average socio-economic indicators. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 22.6 per cent, is in line with the national average. However, a number of children joining the school have restricted experiences and language skills and the overall attainment is below that expected for their age. Currently, 78 pupils (28 per cent, above the national average) have identified special educational needs. Fourteen pupils, 5 per cent, have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is well above the national average. These figures include ten pupils with physical disabilities who attend the school. These pupils mostly attend classes with the other pupils although they also have some specific individual provision as necessary.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21512	Anthony Painter	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology (ICT) Citizenship Design and technology
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
19120	Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Religious education Geography History
15023	Ali Haouas	Team inspector	English English as an additional language (EAL) Art and design Music Physical education
2423	Sue Leyden	Team inspector	Special educational needs (SEN)

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Despite recent action, which is having a positive impact on some aspects of provision, this school has serious weaknesses. Its overall effectiveness and value for money are **unsatisfactory**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 causes pupils to underachieve.
- Weaknesses in leadership and management have led to slow reactions to declining standards.
- Attendance is poor and insufficient efforts have been made to improve it.
- Good recent action to improve pupils' behaviour leads to overall good behaviour and attitudes.
- Improving teaching in Years 3 to 6 is redressing some of the decline in standards of attainment although these are still below average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils reach the expected standards in information and communication technology.
- Physically disabled pupils are well supported, particularly in their individual needs.
- Teachers do not use assessment information enough when planning pupils' tasks.
- Pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not satisfactorily developed across the curriculum.

Unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have declined and little effective action has been taken to tackle identified weakness in attendance. Provision for ICT has been improved and standards are rising. Subject co-ordinators have clearer roles and outline action plans but many are new and few have had sufficient opportunities to contribute enough to improvements.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

Pupils' overall achievement is **satisfactory**. Although children's overall attainment is below average on entering the school, they make good gains in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development. By the time they start Year 1, most reach the standards expected at this age. Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 means that pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Standards of attainment fall and by the end of Year 2 are well below those found nationally, reflected in the school's national test results at this age for the past four years. These results have mostly been well below those found in similar schools. The trend of the Year 2 results has been below the national trend and there is little evidence of improvement amongst current pupils. Similarly, the trend of the school's results in the Year 6 tests has been falling. Attainment has been primarily well below average when

compared with all schools and those with similar prior attainment. Recent action to improve teaching has had a positive impact in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are currently achieving well overall in these classes. However, the pace lost in earlier years restricts pupils' progress and the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are still below the national averages by the end of Year 6.

The school ensures pupils' overall **satisfactory** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development although more could be done to promote spiritual development. Higher behaviour expectations are leading to pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, particularly where teachers use the school systems with consistency. Attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. Recent efforts have been successful in establishing a sound curriculum making use of national guidance. Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes builds on children's prior experiences and introduces them well to school routines. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 has improved and much is now good. However, the overall quality of teaching seen is **satisfactory** and the impact of the good teaching is diminished by unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 that have led to weak achievement over time. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers do not have good strategies to control pupils or match work well to their levels of attainment. In many other lessons, teachers engage pupils' attention with good relationships and high behaviour expectations. They encourage learning with clear explanations and good resources. Teachers track pupils' attainment more securely and are beginning to set group targets, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, they make inconsistent use of these assessment systems to challenge all pupils, particularly those with higher ability levels.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **unsatisfactory**.

Leadership has been slow to respond to clear indications of declining standards. Recent developments, aided by the local authority, have been positive but some weaknesses have not been tackled with sufficient rigour.

The current management plan focuses on developments to raise standards although some weaknesses have been given insufficient attention. Too little use has been made of monitoring and review to take action to improve provision, such as improving teaching.

The action taken by the governing body in the face of declining standards has been limited in scope until recently. However, governors are now more involved in strategic planning.

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

Parents have satisfactory views of the school and feel that their children like school. Pupils are positive about their relationships with teachers and other pupils.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve teaching and raise standards of attainment and achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2;
- take positive action to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;

- improve leadership and management by paying greater attention to rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning;
- extend and improve the co-ordinators' role;
- make more use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' abilities when planning lessons;
- ensure numeracy, literacy and ICT are systematically developed across the curriculum.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils' overall achievement is **satisfactory**. Although children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, the unsatisfactory achievement in Years 1 and 2 depresses standards too much. Standards by the end of Year 6 are **below average**.

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

- Pupils with special educational needs and those with physical difficulties achieve well.
- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes, particularly in their personal and social development.
- Weak teaching does not allow pupils to achieve sufficiently in Years 1 and 2 and standards fall.
- Improving strategies are helping pupils' standards in Years 3 to 6 to rise although they are still below average.
- Standards in ICT reach the expected levels through the school.
- Standards in religious education are below the expected levels.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils with physical disabilities and those who have a Statement of Special Educational Need make good progress. They are well supported in their lessons and are encouraged to take a full part in all the school's activities. Sometimes progress is very good, for example when activities are closely matched and designed to address their personal individual difficulties and concerns. By the end of Year 6, despite their difficulties, some pupils with physical disabilities achieve results expected for their age. Other pupils with special educational needs who receive additional help generally make slow but steady progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and in their personal and social development. However, in lessons where work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities, some pupils have difficulty in completing tasks without individual help and do not achieve as well as they could.
2. The achievement of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Those who are in the early stages of learning English are supported by a specialist one afternoon a week. However, class teachers do not always identify support strategies to address the individual needs of these pupils.

#### **Foundation Stage**

3. Children joining the nursery class have a wide range of attainment with some showing levels of development similar to those expected at this age. However, a number of children have restricted experiences and language skills and the overall attainment is below that expected for their age. The good provision in the nursery and reception classes builds carefully on children's prior attainment and allows them to achieve well in all areas of learning. The children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they quickly settle into the well-established routines. The small size of groups allows good contact with adults and this extends and enhances pupils' language skills. Current teaching strategies being used in the

reception class to promote achievement further are having a positive effect. By the time they begin Year 1, the overall standards of attainment are as expected at this stage of their learning.

## Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.4 (13.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.0 (12.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (13.8)	16.2 (16.3)

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

- Despite the promising start in the Foundation Stage classes, this momentum is not maintained in Years 1 and 2 and pupils' achievements in these classes are unsatisfactory. This is reflected in the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection, results have been mostly well below the national averages and have compared very unfavourably with those in similar schools. The mathematics result in 2004 tests rose to below the national average and was average compared with similar schools. However, at the same time, the writing result fell into the lowest 5 per cent of the country. These results continued the overall school trend of falling results which has been below the national trend.
- The standards of attainment observed in the inspection confirm the school's test results and are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. These weaknesses have a contributory impact on low attainment in other subjects. Weaknesses in teachers' planning, expectations and control strategies have limited recent achievement and standards. The school's problems with maintaining consistent staffing have had a negative impact in these classes and most current teachers are temporary. Too little has been done to establish systems of assessment and routines to aid these teachers. Insufficient attention has been paid over time to identifying aspects of teaching that needed improvement in order to establish effective achievement and standards. However, current improvements in provision for ICT are helping pupils to achieve well in this subject and reach the expected standards for their age. Standards in religious education do not reach the expected levels in the locally agreed syllabus.

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (24.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.0 (23.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.8 (26.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Recent strategies to use assessment information more effectively to set targets are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6. However, the deficit left from the unsatisfactory achievement and falling standards in Years 1 and 2 restrict pupils' overall achievement.

7. The school's results in the Year 6 tests have been mostly well below average over recent years, similar to those in the Year 2 tests. The trend of results has been falling below the national trend. In 2003 results for all three subjects were in the lowest 5 per cent when compared with similar schools. However, the 2004 tests showed particular improvements in English, where results were below the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Mathematics results also improved, but to a lesser extent, remaining well below average. Science results, however, maintained their low level. Lesson observations during the inspection suggest that improvements are being maintained in all three subjects and overall standards in Years 3 to 6 are rising.
8. Pupils' progress is good in current lessons because teachers are making greater efforts to match work to pupils' needs and to set challenging targets. This process is not yet complete and there is evidence of less challenging work in some lessons and in pupils' books suggesting that overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are currently below average in English, mathematics and science, better than those in the 2004 tests. Pupils' improving literacy and numeracy skills are enhancing their standards of attainment in other subjects although this is not yet systematic enough to have all the possible impact. Standards in religious education do not reach the expected levels in the locally agreed syllabus. As in the Years 1 and 2 classes, the school's improved approach to ICT is helping pupils to achieve well and many are currently reaching the expected levels of attainment.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** overall. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements, is **satisfactory**, but there are weaknesses in spiritual and cultural development. The pupils have **poor** levels of attendance and their punctuality is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attitudes to learning are good overall, although they are weaker in Years 1 and 2.
- Behaviour is improving as new initiatives start to take effect.
- Personal development is increasingly well promoted, but pupils' spiritual awareness and cultural development are not systematically developed.
- The very low attendance figures have a detrimental impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Too many pupils arrive late and miss learning at the start of the school day.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils show good attitudes to learning, particularly when work interests and involves them and is matched carefully to their needs. Thus, in many lessons seen during the inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6, pupils are developing good relationships and show interest in their work. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate on their tasks and try hard to please. Pupils respond well to clear regular routines and willingly take part in activities, sharing resources sensibly and working well in pairs or groups.
10. Good recent actions to improve pupils' behaviour have led to overall good behaviour because of firm, fair and rigorous approaches to their implementation. Pupils' good behaviour is reflected in the small number of exclusions, despite a number of pupils with behaviour concerns. The involvement of pupils in determining rules and sanctions is a positive move that has helped pupils to consider and improve their own self-discipline. The school operates a good range of rewards for good behaviour and good

work and this encourages pupils to try harder. Where teachers make consistent use of the school's strategies, pupils recognise the boundaries and the resulting increased attention improves both behaviour and learning in lessons. In a few lessons, teaching is weaker and the management of behaviour is insecure. For example, pupils lose attention in unsatisfactory lessons in Years 1 and 2 which are not sufficiently focused on pupils' needs. Conversations with pupils and communication with parents provide evidence that some bullying still occurs although the school's measures are having a positive impact. None was observed during the period of the inspection and pupils indicate that they have confidence in staff to deal with any issues.

## 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	200	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	16	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

- The school's positive approach to inclusion encourages pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities to develop confidence and self-esteem. They work hard in lessons, concentrate well and pay close attention to the teachers and to support assistants. They develop good relationships with other pupils and with staff because they are treated with respect and are fully included in all activities. The presence of pupils with complex individual needs in the school has a positive influence on the behaviour and attitudes of other children, who enjoy offering help where it is needed, in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils with English as an additional language mix well with the other pupils, whatever their backgrounds. They are keen to participate in activities and school events. The majority are motivated and are well integrated into the school.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.2	School data:	1.2
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

- Attendance continues to be well below the national average with no improvement since the last inspection when it was identified as a key issue. Many parents take their

children out of school for holidays in term time and there is a high incidence of illness, over and above the expected medical needs of the few children with physical disabilities. Despite the regular visits of the education welfare officer, absence monitoring is not adequate. This is because the use of symbols to denote different types of absence is inconsistent and the senior managers do not effectively track trends and work with particular problematic groups to improve attendance. The school does not have sufficiently well established reward systems or competitions to encourage pupils and parents to understand the importance of regular attendance. The school and parents are not placing enough importance on regular attendance with the result that pupils too readily have days off school and achievement suffers.

14. A significant number of pupils are not punctual for the beginning of school. The school secretary keeps a late book, but monitoring by senior managers is patchy and lacks rigour. Consequently some families persist in being late and the pupils invariably miss the vital time for settling down and starting lessons in the right frame of mind.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Children in the nursery and reception classes are introduced to school routines and organisation well and quickly feel part of the school. Some lessons give careful attention to the consideration of issues such as bullying and consideration for others also given emphasis. The Dinosaur School<sup>1</sup> initiative gives a good range of support for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to consider their own feelings, actions and personal development. This is improving attitudes and behaviour for these pupils. Older pupils are given some responsibilities, which they carry out well. The school has a good range of planned initiatives to increase pupils' levels of responsibility. Some initiatives, such as the prefects system and the school council, are embryonic and are yet to make much impact on pupils' personal development.
16. Assemblies help pupils to gain understanding of moral and ethical issues. However, some assemblies do not comply with statutory requirements. Most make little contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual awareness, such as through reflecting about important issues which concern them. There is little to generate awe and wonder in learning in the curriculum, which rarely excites pupils as it would if there were carefully planned and imaginatively executed first-hand experiences. As a result, spiritual development is unsatisfactory. However, there are increasing opportunities for working in groups, which contribute to the development of social skills and help forge good relationships. Pupils' moral development is increasingly effectively promoted, such as through their involvement in class rules to ensure that pupils know right from wrong.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Although much teaching is good, its impact is diminished by unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2. Recent efforts have been successful in establishing a sound curriculum with satisfactory opportunities for enrichment.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning through the school is **satisfactory**. Much good teaching enables pupils to learn well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Dinosaur School is a structured teaching programme that makes use of resources, including video episodes and puppets, to encourage pupils to talk about their actions and emotions within a safe and secure environment. It is led by staff with specific training for the role.

the impact of teaching is reduced by unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2. Developing assessment systems are **satisfactory** although teachers could make more use of the information.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to unsatisfactory achievement and falling standards.
- Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes gives children a good start to their learning.
- Better planning and organisation have raised the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils with physical difficulties are supported well.
- Teachers do not make consistent use of assessment information to plan tasks that consistently challenge pupils to achieve more.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (7%)	29 (52%)	19 (34%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	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.

17. The overall quality of teaching has declined from that seen in the last inspection although the relative strengths and weaknesses of the key stages remain. The proportion of observed lessons graded as less than satisfactory has remained at a similar level but these lessons are all in Years 1 and 2, representing nearly 30 per cent of teaching seen in these classes. This leads to unsatisfactory learning and achievement for these pupils. The school has had to manage considerable staff changes over time, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where currently most teachers are on temporary contracts. However, the school's past performance suggests that provision for this age group has been weak for some while. Insufficient action has been taken to ensure that teaching builds effectively on the good start that children make in the nursery and reception classes.
18. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage classes are good. Teachers and the support staff in both the reception and nursery classes have a good understanding of children's personal needs and respond to them well. Staff work well together to promote children's learning well and there are satisfactory procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress. In the nursery, regular observations of what children know and can do and discussions about all the children ensure that their needs are known by all staff. In the reception class, the teacher keeps increasingly full records of how well children have learned. She uses this information to group children and set tasks to meet their identified needs.
19. The school has recently improved its approach to behaviour management and this is leading to good relationships in many lessons. Many teachers use the agreed strategies well to set increasingly clear and consistent expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils mostly try to reach these expectations and this is improving the quality of teaching and the success of lessons. It is a particularly good approach when linked to careful planning of lessons to interest and involve pupils. For example, a



Year 5/6 mathematics lesson was conducted at good pace with pupils writing answers on their own whiteboards and giving explanations of their thinking. These processes are leading to better attitudes and higher achievement for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Lessons with weaker use of the systems are generally the least successful with teachers losing time and pace as they deal with pupils' inattention.

20. The school's recent attention to improving lesson planning is having a positive impact in many lessons. It is leading to a number of well-organised lessons where teachers are able to use good resources and explanations to capture pupils' attention and help them to learn. In many lessons, there is good questioning that makes pupils think hard about their work. This is usefully developing their language and social skills as well as their understanding of the subject. Some particularly effective questioning takes place in discussion sessions that are features of the end of many lessons.
21. There is increasing use of assessment to track pupils' progress and establish sufficiently challenging targets. In particular, the school's Intensive Support Programme<sup>2</sup> leads teachers to make clear evaluations of the effectiveness of learning with frequent assessments. This information is being used with greater precision and effectiveness, notably in Years 3 to 6, and is beginning to improve teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Teachers often identify clearly in their planning what pupils will learn and this helps them to evaluate the success of the lesson. However, there is less consistent use of these identified aims to help pupils to recognise their own progress. Many lessons include activities for groups of pupils at different attainment levels but the match of challenge to these groups is not consistently secure. This weakness is a key feature of the weaker teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Some tasks lack rigour, such as colouring or worksheets, and do not contribute sufficiently to learning in the subject. Other tasks do not build on pupils' earlier learning at a sufficient pace.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with physical disabilities and those who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is good because they are well supported in lessons and because teachers take care to involve the pupils in all the different activities. Work is generally well planned and matched to individual needs. Teachers make sure that pupils with physical disabilities are fully included in all class discussions and that their views are treated with respect. Skilled and sensitive support from support assistants ensures that pupils understand what they have to do and are able to record their work. Clear and specific targets in pupils' individual education plans, with daily records of pupils' responses to lessons, help teachers monitor and review progress. The quality of teaching for pupils with learning difficulties who do not have additional support is more variable. In some lessons work has not been adapted enough to individual needs and pupils have difficulty in understanding or completing written tasks. Where they do not have further support in the classroom, their learning is limited.
23. The quality of support provided for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall. In the best teaching, pupils are grouped to benefit from support by other pupils, the teacher and teaching assistants, making good progress. The school makes good use of specialist support from the local education authority to guide teachers and give specific and effective support to the small number of pupils who are

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<sup>2</sup> This programme is being undertaken with support and monitoring from the local education authority and Her Majesty's Inspectors. It makes use of regular assessments and targets to focus teaching and learning on the needs of pupils, tracking their progress carefully and precisely.

new to learning English. However, in weaker teaching, teachers do not consistently make certain of the precise match of tasks to pupils' prior attainment. In many lessons this is ameliorated by good quality support but, in some cases, pupils do not make all the progress they are capable of making.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **satisfactory** opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A secure framework ensures that pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
- Links between subjects are not well established and pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills are not well developed in other subjects.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Children receive a good start to their school life in the nursery and reception class.
- Accommodation is spacious but not always used to best effect to benefit pupils.

### Commentary

24. The curriculum is satisfactory, as it was in the last inspection report. Recent developments in planning successfully ensure that all required subjects are represented in the school's curriculum to meet statutory requirements. In most subjects there is a clear framework to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding over time. This often makes good use of national guidance and is increasingly linked to assessment opportunities. Many subject co-ordinators are currently evaluating the success of the new structures and using this to identify where further development is required. The school recognises that the work is not complete and further attention is needed to increase the development of investigations, particularly in mathematics and science. The coverage of some subjects such as religious education needs further improvement if standards are to rise.
25. Insufficient action has been taken over time to help ensure that the curriculum is rich, relevant and exciting for pupils to help stimulate a desire to learn. A limited range of visits and visitors is supplemented with occasional special events such as the recent 'Pirate' event. This has been a positive move in capturing pupils' interest and is contributing to the improving attitudes amongst pupils. Pupils perform to other audiences, such as at Christmas and at harvest time, to help increase levels of confidence. However, there are few opportunities such as residential visits to help enrich experiences and develop personal and social skills. The school has a satisfactory range of well attended and popular clubs such as Bible Club, hand bells, table tennis and badminton for pupils to extend their interests. However, there are limited opportunities for them to engage in competitive sport.
26. There are too few links between subjects to help make learning more relevant for pupils. Links are evident, such as in mathematics when Year 3 pupils produce colourful, symmetrical patterns using information technology. However, they occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning. As a result, pupils do not develop language, mathematical or information technology skills well enough through other subjects.

27. Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the subjects of the National Curriculum. Personal, social and health education is sound, includes sex education and covers issues relating to the use and misuse of drugs through the school's science programme. The Dinosaur School initiative in Years 1 and 2 is a very positive move and is helping to develop personal and social skills in these classes.
28. The curriculum for pupils with physical disabilities is good. All the pupils are integrated into mainstream lessons and follow the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Additional specialist teaching sessions, designed to meet the pupils' individual needs, help the pupils overcome particular difficulties with their learning, fine motor skills and mobility. Good use is made of specialist services, such as the physiotherapy, occupational therapy and sensory support services, to design and provide additional programmes that promote pupils' physical and educational well-being. The spacious accommodation and well-adapted access throughout the school for wheelchair users and those with mobility problems encourage pupils to become independent in and around the school.
29. The provision for pupils with other special educational needs is good and they are well supported. A good range of additional small group teaching in withdrawal groups provides opportunities for pupils to receive additional help for their literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Two well-equipped and furnished specialist teaching rooms provide good accommodation and an attractive environment for learning for the small-group teaching sessions.
30. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage of learning are good and take account of the early learning goals. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes take part in a wide range of activities and experiences, which give them a good start to their education, especially in their development of personal and social skills.
31. Internally, the accommodation is spacious and contains all that is needed to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. However, many displays lack quality and rarely help to extend pupils' learning and celebrate their work. Many storerooms are untidy with some old resources requiring disposal. An audit is required of the current use of internal space as rooms are not always used to best effect. Externally accommodation is well provided, with large playgrounds with games and wildlife areas including pond, to stimulate interest and promote learning. Resources to support learning are adequate overall, although in ICT they are now quite good. However, artefacts are in short supply, such as in history and religious education, to bring the curriculum to life for pupils.

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

The systems for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **unsatisfactory**. The provision of support, advice and guidance is **satisfactory**. Pupils are **satisfactorily** involved in the running of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school does not follow up unexplained absence promptly enough.
- Good work is being done in tackling bullying and managing inappropriate behaviour.
- The needs of pupils with physical or medical difficulties are well catered for.
- The pupils are safe and secure within the school building.

- The lack of formal recording of accidents means the school cannot track the pupils' well-being carefully enough.

## **Commentary**

32. The systems for ensuring pupils are carefully looked after are not as good as at the last inspection and some identified weaknesses have not been remedied. In the main part of the school, routines are too lax to ensure detailed knowledge of each pupil's welfare. For example, the recording and monitoring of attendance are a concern remaining from the last inspection and there is still no accident book to record details of incidents and the treatments. In practice minor bumps and grazes are dealt with quickly and effectively and young children in the Foundation Stage are safe and secure.
33. Staff use their common sense should they be suspicious about possible child abuse and know to contact the headteacher in confidence. There is a planned programme of updating training in the latest child protection guidance. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. The daily check by the premises manager ensures that the site is kept free from hazards. Internal security systems are good. Pupils in the younger classes are well looked after at break times.
34. Overall the support and guidance for the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with physical difficulties are well looked after, with good specialist resources and access to expert professionals. The introduction of more thorough assessment systems means work can be better matched to different groups of pupils. The Intensive Support Programme is proving successful in giving extra academic support where it is most needed.
35. The school's positive approach to discipline is proving successful. Pupils with particular behavioural problems are closely monitored and given effective individual support. The recent introduction of the Dinosaur School for younger pupils and an anger management course for boys has increased these pupils' self-discipline and social awareness. The inspection team does not concur with a small number of parents who believe that the school is not effective in dealing with bullying and in doing all it can to stamp it out.
36. Pupils have a satisfactory voice in the school and most pupils feel they can turn to an adult in the school if they have ideas or worries. A survey has established pupils' likes and concerns, but there is still work to be done in taking up some of the issues. The school council gives some pupils an increasing chance to be involved in their community, with a particularly successful input into the design of the local playground. The introduction of peer leaders and prefects is a good move to involve pupils more in the day-to-day running of the school.
37. The school takes good care of pupils with physical disabilities and those with a Statement of Special Educational Need, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' progress and welfare are closely monitored by both teachers and support assistants. Targets in pupils' individual education plans and physical disability grids are carefully chosen and provide a sound basis on which to evaluate pupils' progress and development. Class teachers are fully aware of the pupils' difficulties and needs and take these into account when planning lessons and in their management of the class. Careful individual records are kept and used to inform parents and to plan changes to the support arrangements.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **satisfactory** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good general information about school news and events.
- Reports do not give a sufficiently clear message on how each pupil has progressed over the year in each subject.
- Parents of physically disabled children are very well involved in understanding and helping with their children's achievement.
- Relationships with a small core of dissatisfied parents are not sufficiently cordial to ensure this parental group works productively with the school for their children's sake.
- Parents of new children in the nursery and reception are well included in the first stages of education.
- There are not enough opportunities for parents to find out more about what their children are learning and how to help them.

### Commentary

38. The partnership with parents is not as good as at the last inspection. Although most parents are supportive, a small but significant core of parents is agitated about a perceived increase in bullying. Although the school is tackling behaviour issues effectively the headteacher and governors are not being sufficiently proactive in working with these disgruntled parents to engender a better understanding of bullying. A good number of parents are helping in school as volunteers and in organising the successful Parents, Friends and Teachers Association.
39. General information about school activities is good and the regular newsletter gives a good flavour of the school. Parents of children new to the nursery and reception classes have plenty of good quality advice about how to help settle their children in. Induction procedures for pupils with English as an additional language help pupils to settle quickly. Advice and support for parents who wish to attend English classes are provided. Parents have satisfactory information on their children's achievement when they attend the regular teacher consultation meetings. However, annual written reports do not show the precise progress their child has made over the year in each subject taught. Parents of children with Statements of Special Educational Need, including those with physical disabilities, are kept well briefed on how their children are doing. They are valuable partners in their children's education and are very well included in discussing progress and support at their children's annual review meeting.
40. Communication on the curriculum and the regular setting of homework is not as good as it should be because of many recent changes in class teachers. Consequently parents are not familiar enough with what is being taught always to be able to help their children's learning from home. However, the school has given workshops to parents about Anger Management for Boys and the Dinosaur School so home and school can work together successfully to manage behaviour. Regular newsletters for parents of children in the nursery give good indications of what is being taught and how parents can support learning.
41. There are good relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities. Annual reviews are well managed and the school

reports contain detailed information about the pupils' welfare and progress over the year. Parents' views are fully taken into account when planning new targets for their child and when reviewing the child's overall progress and development. The school has established effective links with specialist support services within the local education authority and the Health Service and makes good use of their support.

42. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Situated as it is at the end of a large housing estate without an obvious centre to the community, the school has to make an extra effort to be locally active. Nevertheless the school has been successfully involved in the development of a community playground and hires out its swimming pool to a local club. Pupils make satisfactory use of the local area and in particular the adjacent River Cray meadows to enliven the curriculum. There is a strong rapport with the local Christian church, but insufficient contact with other faiths to extend religious education.
43. Liaison with other schools and colleges is satisfactory. There is effective sharing of pastoral and academic information before Year 6 pupils transfer to a range of secondary schools. A useful link with a school for physically disabled children provides valuable advice and expertise to the staff and the chance for integration for the special school pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. Leadership, management and governance are **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Unsatisfactory leadership has not secured sufficient progress.
- There has been insufficient effective monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The current school improvement plan is well focused on raising pupils' achievement but key weaknesses in the last report have not been addressed.
- Recent measures including the Intensified Support Programme are beginning to have a positive impact on raising achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

### **Commentary**

44. Leadership is unsatisfactory. Standards have been declining over the last four years and effective action to reverse the trend only recently initiated. The school has had to cope with substantial management problems. Insecurity about schools in the local area has led to a large turnover of staff that has inhibited continuity. Currently this is a particular problem in Years 1 and 2, which are mainly staffed with agency teachers. However, school data shows persistent low achievement in these year groups going back to the last inspection. Other key issues, such as poor attendance and elements of care and welfare of pupils, have not been tackled since the last inspection. These have exacerbated the negative impact on pupils' achievement. Although the current school improvement plan is clearly focused on raising achievement, its implementation has been inconsistent. However, the recent introduction of the Intensified Support Programme and the support provided by the local education authority are already showing positive signs of improvement. There is a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6.

45. Monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour and is not clearly focused on improving quality. The headteacher has, for instance, recently mainly focused on monitoring how targets are being implemented and the extent to which pupils understand them. However, there has been insufficient attention over time to looking at the impact on learning and ways to improve teaching. Although leadership of other key staff has improved recently, particularly in mathematics and ICT, the overall impact has been unsatisfactory. Many subject co-ordinators are new to their posts and their monitoring is narrowly focused on planning, with some attention to pupils' work. This is beginning to give a clearer picture of where the school has strengths and weaknesses. However, they have been given insufficient opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching and learning to identify what staff development would improve teaching where is currently weak. Opportunities for teachers to observe good practice within the school and elsewhere are not used to secure improvements. Currently, there are moves to share good practice and make improvements, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
46. The school's provision for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is effectively managed by the deputy headteacher and the teachers with responsibility for specific aspects of the provision. Good arrangements are in place for identifying and assessing pupils' special needs and for recording their progress. Support staff are well qualified, effectively deployed and provide good support for pupils in lessons. Good liaison with external agencies and support services ensures that the pupils receive the additional services and support they need. However, there is insufficient monitoring of classroom practice by the senior management team to identify weaknesses in teaching or the needs of teachers for additional support in planning activities. The lack of an overall view of the effectiveness of the use of resources limits the school's ability to identify and plan for future developments.
47. The action taken by the governing body in the face of declining standards has been limited in scope until recently. However, in the context of recent initiatives, governors are now part of a focus group involving officers from the local education authority. Greater emphasis has been placed on using school data to understand what is working in the school and what is not. Governors now have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are more involved in strategic planning and this is helping the school to sustain a focus on improving standards.
48. Financial and resource management are satisfactory overall. The school now makes satisfactory use of its finances to meet pupils' needs and the needs of the curriculum. In recent years excessive reserves have been accumulated while the school faced the uncertainty of falling rolls. Financial planning is now stronger with greater attention on ensuring best value for expenditure. Surpluses are being used to improve resources, for example the good extension and provision for ICT. Further planning links expenditure directly to the raising of standards through the school development plan. Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is targeted successfully to provide for specialist staffing. However, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money as standards have declined.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	876,526	Balance from previous year	157,108
Total expenditure	951,127	Balance carried forward to the next	82,507

Expenditure per pupil	3,522.69		
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

49. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of abilities. Although some show levels of attainment that are expected nationally, a number have restricted experiences and low attainment, particular in their language skills. As a result, the overall attainment of children entering the nursery is below that expected for their ages. Good teaching and learning based on a secure curriculum in the nursery and reception classes result in children achieving well. Good leadership ensures that all staff in both classes have a good understanding of children's personal needs and respond to them well. Staff work well together to promote children's learning and there are satisfactory procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress. Teachers know the children very well and use this information to match their tasks and activities. They make increasing use of more formal assessments of what children know and can do. In the reception class, assessment information is used more systematically to identify learning needs and set tasks for children at different levels of development. Children make good progress and most reach the expected standards by the time they begin Year 1. This is similar to the position and provision described in the last report.
50. Children with physical difficulties play a full part in the life of the Foundation Stage classes. They make good progress with the other children because they are given well-targeted support. However, the limited space in the reception class restricts easy movement, particularly when children have to use a walking frame.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well because staff establish and maintain very good relationships.
- Clear routines give children confidence in their learning.
- Staff are aware of children's individual needs and respond positively to all children.

#### **Commentary**

51. A number of children start in the nursery relatively unused to playing with other children or sharing. They settle quickly and part from their parents or carers with increasing confidence. Adults set very good examples in establishing good relationships. For example, they welcome each child as they arrive. Good teaching enables most children to attain the expected standards in the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1.
52. Children achieve well because staff know them well and are sensitive to their needs. In the nursery, teaching is good and staff are consistent in their expectations, support and praise, even when temporary staff need to be used. Children's relationships with all the adults are secure and trusting, developed through good discussion and interaction. They confidently ask for help when they need it. Staff provide stimulating activities, pose questions and make suggestions that engage children's curiosity.

Children increasingly make their own positive choices about what they want to do next, demonstrating their growing independence.

53. Reception class children settle very quickly into the new routines of their class. The teacher's positive and supportive organisation and routines boost their confidence and self-esteem. Children learn new skills and consolidate old ones through a good balance of organised teaching sessions and freely chosen play. Children's opportunities to improve their learning skills are enhanced when they work at their own activities, often working successfully with other children. Children behave well in whole-class sessions and their concentration is good. They quickly understand the teacher's clear strategies and respond very well. Children's self-discipline is developed through pleasant but consistent reminders of what is appropriate and what is unacceptable.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching uses language in many contexts to extend children's vocabulary.
- Stories are used well to develop knowledge of letters and words.

### **Commentary**

54. Teaching is good and children achieve well, with most reaching the expected standards in the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children make good progress because teachers use questioning and discussion well to focus on increasing vocabulary and understanding. Adults promote children's spoken language by engaging them and expecting the children to answer in more extended phrases and sentences. Both the nursery and reception classes provide language-rich environments with many opportunities for children to enjoy books and to write.
55. Teachers use children's enjoyment of stories well to develop the early stages of both reading and writing. Children are interested in the pictures and characters and usually listen attentively. Nursery children particularly enjoy saying the repeated phrases. Reception class children are gradually prepared for work in Year 1. They continue to enjoy stories and become more aware of key words and initial letter sounds, identifying these correctly in the big books. Most children readily identify and write their names and a number make good progress in developing skills of letter and number formation.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of opportunities extends children's learning.
- Reception class children are given good preparation for work in Year 1.

### **Commentary**

56. Children achieve well in both classes because of good teaching and reach the expected standards by Year 1. Teachers plan and organise a wide range of opportunities for children to consolidate and develop their mathematical knowledge. Adults effectively encourage learning by using good resources that promote understanding and develop children's vocabulary. Learning is reinforced by good questioning that is pitched well to make children with different levels of development think carefully. As a result, children with special educational needs are supported well. In the reception class, children are introduced to parts of the numeracy hour to prepare them for work in Year 1. These sessions are well planned and provide a good range of activities that interest and involve children well. The teacher makes good use of displays and other resources to extend children's use of mathematics.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching gives children many ways to learn about the world around them.

### **Commentary**

57. Good teaching and learning ensure children achieve well. Most are in line to achieve the goals that are set for children of this age by the end of the reception year. This is because teachers use pertinent topics to help children understand themselves and the world around them. For example, nursery children learn parts of the body and different types of clothing as they sing a rhyme about cold weather. Adults encourage children to respond to their good questioning and support them well in their efforts through praise and encouragement. Computers in the nursery and reception classes are always available for free-choice activities. Many children show satisfactory basic skills when using them, for example having good control of the mouse when using drawing programs.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan good activities to develop all aspects of children's physical growth and skills.

### **Commentary**

58. Teachers carefully plan the use of outside areas and regular sessions in the school's hall. A wide range of activities extend children's physical development as part of their learning across the whole curriculum. The outside area is extensive with plentiful equipment and a good surface. Children achieve well and are likely to meet the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1. Teaching is good and uses lots of praise and encouragement to give children confidence to join in activities. In classrooms, children learn to use tools, such as scissors, pencils and other small equipment, with increasing skill and accuracy. In the reception class, children apply and improve their developing skills when they create collages, mould materials and cut out objects.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their imagination.

### **Commentary**

59. Teaching and learning are good overall and children achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, most reach the expected standards. Activities to promote children's creative development are used well to enhance their use of language to express

ideas. Children have good opportunities to develop their imagination through the role-play areas. Learning is particularly effective when adults play with the children to stimulate language for their roles and help them maintain the play.

60. In nursery and reception classes, children enjoy experimenting with paint, modelling and drawing. Paintings are often bold and colourful. Children in the nursery join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes, often singing in particular ways such as loudly and softly. They match movements to the songs and are learning the words well. A good range of simple instruments supplements their learning. Reception children use paint with care and increasing precision, for example in their pictures of sunsets, based on photographs of tropical scenes.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Overall provision for English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are reflected in improving test results.
- Unsatisfactory teaching and achievement in Years 1 and 2 lead to declining standards of attainment.
- Better tracking of pupils' progress and the use of targets is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning but marking is not used consistently to help pupils to improve.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for promoting and actively teaching literacy skills in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

61. Overall standards in English are well below those found nationally in Year 2 and are below national expectations in Year 6. These levels of attainment are lower than those in the last report. Because of staff turnover, which has affected Years 1 and 2 adversely, and persistent weaknesses in teaching, achievement for these pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 3 to 6, including those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, achieve well. The use of booster classes and regular reviews of pupils' progress is now having a positive impact on older pupils' achievement. These improving standards are apparent in the 2004 Year 6 National Curriculum tests, which were below average compared with national standards, but average compared with similar schools. Improving assessment and tracking of pupils in Years 3 to 6 suggest that this improvement will be maintained. However, standards in Year 2 National Curriculum tests have remained low with writing in 2004 being in the lowest 5 per cent of the country when compared nationally and with similar schools.
62. Listening and speaking skills are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but improve in Years 3 to 6 and are good. Where teaching is good, pupils respond well because teachers use questioning effectively to elicit information and match questions accurately to different abilities. They draw effectively on pupils' previous learning, for instance when focusing on their targets, and enable them to work collaboratively in pairs. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school because opportunities for listening and speaking are not systematically planned and assessed regularly.

63. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in their reading. Many develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words and use the context to guess meaning. However, a sizeable number still read hesitantly and lack fluency and accuracy. Library and research skills are not taught systematically although some opportunities are well used, for instance when pupils use the Internet to find information. Satisfactory teaching of reading makes use of clear analysis of pupils' needs, allowing teachers to work closely with pupils and set targets for improvement. Pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 is limited in range and there are insufficient opportunities for them to examine and write in different styles. Writing improves in Years 3 to 6 and some good examples of word processed work were on display but ICT opportunities are not planned systematically. Although handwriting is regularly practised, few pupils use joined handwriting consistently.
64. Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 and almost all lessons seen in these classes during the week of inspection were good. Teachers' planning identifies what pupils will learn to guide the lesson and to help assess learning at different points in the lesson. Teachers' explanations are clear and independent activities are used to enable pupils to practise new skills. For instance, in one lesson in a Year 5/6 class, the teacher demonstrated how to annotate a text to identify how the author brings the characters to life. The pupils then used the same method to highlight speech as a clue to contrasting two characters. However, teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Some teaching is unsatisfactory due to the temporary teacher's unfamiliarity with the National Literacy Strategy and the school's approaches. Some activities in weak lessons are not structured clearly enough to enable pupils to make sense of them and understand fully what they are expected to achieve. Throughout the school, teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistently effective and is not used enough to guide pupils in improving their work.
65. Overall leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The initiative of using the Intensive Support Programme to track pupils' progress and use targets is beginning to improve quality and standards are rising in Years 3 to 6. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, committed to improving achievement. However, her effectiveness is limited as she has not had any opportunities to monitor provision and to make a greater impact. Overall improvement in provision for English since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

66. Pupils' literacy skills are not promoted effectively. Specific vocabulary is often explained perfunctorily and not carefully identified in planning with a view to improving and enriching pupils' use of language across the curriculum. There is no organised school policy for language across the curriculum. Some good examples were seen of collaborative learning to promote speaking and listening, but they are not part of a planned programme.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to pupils' underachievement and well below national average standards by the end of Year 2.

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 and standards are rising, although they are below national averages by the end of Year 6.
- Monitoring and assessment data is used well to establish good plans for the subject's needed development.
- Teachers do not make enough consistent use of available information about how well pupils are doing to match work precisely to their needs.
- The development of mathematical skills is not given enough systematic emphasis in other subjects.

## Commentary

67. Standards are well below national average levels by the end of Year 2 and pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time in Years 1 and 2. This is largely because the quality of teaching, much of which is currently undertaken by temporary teachers, is not good enough. For example, teachers' expectations are not high enough and work is rarely matched to pupils' precise needs. In some lessons, effective control strategies are not fully established, which leads to inattention from some pupils that slows the rate at which pupils learn. Over recent years, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests at this age have been mostly well below average. Although the 2004 results were higher, but still below average, this improvement has not been maintained.
68. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are starting to rise after a period of declining national test results. This is because good teaching and learning give increasing emphasis to the development of understanding. Teachers are establishing higher expectations of behaviour and attention and pupils show good attitudes to learning that contribute positively to their achievement. Teachers mostly pitch work at sufficiently challenging levels and maintain a brisk pace throughout lessons. Their good relationships and purposeful questioning help pupils to develop clear understanding of new knowledge. Despite clear evidence of rising standards over time, as revealed both in lessons and in pupils' past work, they are still below national levels by the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
69. There is a clear framework for developing knowledge, skills and understanding as pupils move through the school. The school's recent involvement in the Intensive Support Programme is leading to more frequent and rigorous analysis of what pupils have learned and clearer and better setting of targets for further improvement. This is having a positive effect, notably in Years 3 to 6. However, teachers do not always make full use of assessment information available. Lesson plans are not always tailored to pupils' precise needs with tasks consistently matched to give pupils the best level of challenge. As a result, work is sometimes too difficult for some, but much more often is too easy for others, especially the more able pupils. Pupils are sometimes required to complete work they already understand before proceeding to more challenging tasks, especially in number work, which affects the rate at which they learn.
70. Teachers are not yet giving enough attention to developing pupils' reasoning skills, initiative and understanding through investigative and problem solving activities to help raise standards. Most teachers do not yet use real life mathematical experiences enough to help pupils appreciate the importance of number in our daily lives. Worksheets which are not relevant for pupils' needs are overused, particularly for younger pupils.

71. The overall leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory as a result of recent improvements. A new but knowledgeable co-ordinator sets a good example through the good quality of her teaching. Data from national tests is now analysed and weaknesses identified so that they can be overcome. She has established clear and rigorous plans for the subject's needed development and has introduced essential initiatives to help secure higher standards. For example, she now monitors planning and pupils' work to ensure that there is coverage of requirements and is leading the development of assessment procedures to help teachers to identify what pupils know and understand and what they need to do next. She has overseen the introduction of targets for pupils in all years, which are helping to improve the rate of learning. Plans have begun for a programme of regular monitoring of lessons to establish what works well and what needs to be done to help raise standards.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum**

72. The development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through other subjects is evident, such as in work linked to science when pupils record outcomes of investigations. Some lessons in the computer suite contribute to pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas such as data handling but the overall strategy for developing mathematics in other subjects is not planned clearly enough. The introduction and development of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum are piecemeal and not part of a carefully planned programme. As a result, teachers lose opportunities to extend pupils' learning and raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 causes pupils to underachieve.
- Improving teaching in Years 3 to 6 is beginning to raise attainment.
- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to match work accurately to pupils' needs and enhance achievement.
- Although there are plans for further development, leadership is not yet fully effective.
- The skills of scientific enquiry are not yet given enough emphasis.

### **Commentary**

73. The most recent National Curriculum tests showed attainment that was well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The inspection confirms those standards by the end of Year 2, which have not improved because the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall. The school's results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests have declined over the past four years. However, the standards currently observed in Year 6 have risen somewhat as a result of attention to improving teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, but they remain below the national averages. These improvements have resulted in satisfactory achievement, although standards are lower than those described in the last report and represent unsatisfactory overall improvement, despite recent action.
74. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is too varied and results in unsatisfactory teaching and learning in these classes. Some lessons are well planned and organised with practical activities to capture pupils' interest. In these lessons, good use of praise and the school's behaviour management strategies motivate and keep pupils' attention. Where



this control and insistence on high standards of behaviour are not maintained, lessons are weaker. In the weakest teaching, insecure management of the classroom and a lack of clear expectations of behaviour and work led to a very slow pace of learning. Pupils' past work indicates that worksheets are used too frequently in these classes and pupils do not develop skills in recording their own findings.

75. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan lessons carefully in these classes, with good choices of resources to aid their explanations. The relationships in classrooms are positive and teachers are more consistent in their approach to behaviour, which is leading to good attitudes and enhancing learning. In many lessons, teachers use good questioning to encourage pupils to think and to share their growing knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, these question and answer sessions are briskly executed which increases the pace of learning and focuses pupils' attention.
76. Increased analysis of data from National Curriculum and other tests is identifying where the subject has strengths and weaknesses. However, teachers do not make full use of marking and the emerging data to plan tasks in lessons that challenge all pupils at the right level. Many pupils are not challenged enough because work is not precisely matched to their levels of attainment. Pupils in mixed age classes are often given the same work, a weakness at the time of the last inspection. As a result, more able pupils sometimes find work too easy, while less able pupils find work too difficult, which prevents them from making the best possible progress.
77. Teaching has not given enough emphasis to developing pupils' skills of enquiry as part of carefully structured scientific investigations. This has left pupils with some clear weaknesses in the range of skills that they can draw upon. There have been recent improvements in approach, including greater attention to practical activities to enliven learning. Some learning has been good, such as in Year 3 where pupils investigated the absorbency of different papers. However, this has not been introduced sufficiently consistently in all years as a means to develop pupils' scientific understanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils test a range of materials to discover the best sound insulator, but they are working to levels well below national standards.
78. The school has taken action to put into place a satisfactory curriculum that makes sound use of national guidance. Links with other subjects take place but are not fully exploited by teachers to make an impact, for instance in raising pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Analysis of planning and some monitoring of pupils' work is leading to clearer picture of how the school needs to improve. Plans for improvement are established but the co-ordinator has few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. As a result, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective leadership has improved teaching and raised standards.
- Teachers use the good resources of the ICT suite to encourage pupils' interest in the subject and develop skills.

- Teachers do not ensure that classroom computers are used systematically in other subjects.
- Assessment information is not consistently used to inform planning.

## Commentary

79. Effective leadership and management from the co-ordinator have helped the school to make good progress since the last inspection. Pupils now reach the expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. This has remedied the considerable weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 to 6 that were identified in the last report. The co-ordinator has very good personal knowledge and understanding of the subject and conveys his enthusiasm well. He has established a new curriculum framework and supported staff in the use of the improved computer resources. Staff confidence and expertise have developed as a result of training and support and most make good use of the ICT suite. The co-ordinator has a good oversight of teachers' planning and pupils' work which has been used to identify where the school needs to improve. There have been limited opportunities for direct observation of teaching and learning although the co-ordinator has been able to work with some teachers to support their development.
80. Although many pupils enter the school with limited experiences in the subject, they achieve well overall. Teachers make good use of their improving subject knowledge to ensure a good range of work is provided for pupils in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard confidently to present information and capture pupils' attention. Lessons are securely planned and most have a good balance of revision and new learning. A developing assessment system is beginning to give information about the relative strengths of pupils' understanding of the topics covered. However, it is newly established and teachers do not use the information systematically to plan work that encourages the best progress for pupils of different attainment levels.
81. In lessons in Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory although weaknesses in organisation detract from learning by slowing the pace of lessons. This leads to inattention by some pupils and teachers do not make good use of the school's behaviour strategies to settle them and promote learning. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and is stronger because teachers make better use of the school's behaviour strategies to ensure good pace to learning. In many lessons, teachers' very good relationships with pupils play an important role in promoting learning. Year 3 pupils, for example, pay extremely good attention as they consider ways to collect information into a database. In other lessons, teachers make good use of a range of strategies to ensure that excited pupils do not get out of hand. Pupils throughout the school gain familiarity with the network as they learn to log on and access different programs. Their skills in using different forms of software improve well. Teachers pay careful attention to using specialist terms correctly in their explanations and questions, which does much to overcome some pupils' limited language learning.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. The overall use of ICT to promote learning in other subjects is satisfactory although there are weaknesses. Teachers plan much work in the computer suite carefully to cover aspects of learning in different subjects. In particular, pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively when Year 4 pupils present ideas in different forms including newspaper articles and play scripts. Pupils' presentations make a good contribution to work in other subjects as they combine text, images and sounds to meet the needs of different audiences. They find information from the Internet to support their learning about Ancient Greece with increasing confidence. Their good skills with painting programs are often used to create work in the style of famous artists. However, teachers do not make full use of the computers that are in each of the classrooms to give pupils further opportunities to practise skills or to support learning in a wider range of subjects.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not reach the expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory over time because it is not matched sufficiently carefully to pupils' needs.
- Religious education makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development, but too little contribution to the development of literacy skills.
- Leadership is unsatisfactory because there is no co-ordinator to steer the subject's development.

#### Commentary

83. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, worse than at the time of the last inspection. This is because too little work is recorded and the overall impact of teaching is unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils do not reach the requirements of the Bexley Agreed Syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils have too little knowledge of world religions and too little opportunity to apply what they are learning about different faiths to their own lives. The lack of a subject co-ordinator leads to unsatisfactory leadership and management and is inhibiting progress because there is too little monitoring and evaluation of what works and what does not.
84. Lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory, with teachers making good use of their positive relationships with pupils to establish effective control and a sound atmosphere for learning. However, pupils' past work and their understanding when questioned show that overall teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory. There are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school so work is rarely matched precisely to pupils' needs. For example, much work involving drawing and colouring of pictures, as seen in the study of Buddhism in Years 5 and 6, does not challenge pupils enough or extend their understanding. Pupils in mixed age classes are often given the same work to complete. Much of the work undertaken by pupils lacks depth and quality and there are few displays to help motivate pupils or celebrate their work. There are few visits, visitors and artefacts to help bring the subject to life, although younger pupils learn about baptism during a

visit to St. Andrew's Church.

85. Pupils are not encouraged often enough to learn from religious stories, to reflect on their meaning and make personal responses to knowledge gained. However, on balance, religious education lessons make a sound contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the importance of courtesy, care and consideration for others and this contributes to their improving attitudes and behaviour. There are too few links with other subjects, especially with literacy, to help make learning more relevant and develop the quality of written work. However, there are effective links with geography through the use of maps in the study of different world faiths.

### **History and geography**

86. These subjects were not included in the main focus of the inspection and inspectors saw one history lesson and no geography lessons. The evidence suggests that standards are below national expectations in both subjects. This is lower than the standards seen in the last inspection. Studied topics often lack depth, with too few opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills to promote learning. Pupils' work is rarely matched sufficiently carefully to their needs and some teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. History is better represented than geography overall, but the quantity and quality of work produced by pupils in both subjects vary unacceptably from class to class. As a result, pupils make erratic progress as they move through the school.
87. The lack of an effective leader is clearly preventing progress in geography, such as through the establishment of a rigorous action plan to secure development. However, the new history co-ordinator has a clear action plan for the subject's continued development. However, the impact on leadership in these subjects is unsatisfactory overall as there are too few opportunities to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

88. Subjects in this area of learning were sampled as they did not form part of the main focus for this inspection. The co-ordinators for each subject are mainly new to their posts and have not yet begun a full evaluation of the school's provision and standards. However, work has begun in reviewing the curriculum for each subject to improve the effectiveness of teaching through the school. The overall impact of leadership of these subjects is therefore unsatisfactory.
89. During the inspection it was possible to sample one lesson in **art and design**. This demonstrated that pupils develop skills that are as expected for their age. They are helped to draw on their previous experience of rubbing textures and were guided well as the teacher demonstrated from her own rubbings. Clear emphasis was given to special vocabulary enabling pupils to understand the concept of patterns and how they can be created. The teacher was particularly effective in prompting pupils to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.
90. In **music**, three lessons were seen. A scheme supports teachers' planning with a good emphasis on listening to different styles of music. This is used well as a way of developing their singing skills. In all lessons seen, pupils were given sufficient time to rehearse and practise their singing. They were challenged to improve the quality of

their work, for instance when they sang in two parts. Provision in music is enhanced through specialist tuition for a number of pupils who learn an instrument.

91. In **physical education**, lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6 only. A new scheme of work introduced recently is being used well by teachers. Lessons were carefully structured to enable pupils to focus on specific skills and rehearse their movements. Pupils with physical disability were well integrated and assistants supported individuals effectively. In one very good lesson, the teacher carefully shared the learning objectives and enthused the pupils as they persevered to improve their performance. Pupils were clear about what to aim for and worked effectively in small groups as they put a sequence together and presented it to the rest of the class. In this lesson, pupils were fully involved in evaluating their performance and that of others. However, in other lessons this was not emphasised sufficiently. All pupils in the school take part in swimming in the school's own pool and reach good standards. The subject leader has very good knowledge of the subject and uses good links with wider agencies well to enhance provision.
92. In **design and technology**, only one lesson could be seen. In this lesson Year 3 pupils learned well because the teacher had prepared resources and organised the lesson well. Pupils were reaching the expected levels of attainment for their age. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers have paid attention to teaching the planning process and pupils are beginning to evaluate their work. The use of structured worksheets in Year 6 helps to identify important design points to steer pupils' learning. However, past work is often limited and does not give a clear indication that teachers have ensured that all aspects of the subject have been covered.

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

93. Only one lesson in this area of the school's work could be directly observed. However, many elements featured in lessons in all subjects. In many lessons, teachers worked hard to ensure that pupils felt valued and secure, enabling them to achieve well. Some questioning, for example, encouraged pupils to think about their responses and improved their confidence. The school's behaviour strategy is often used by teachers to set clear guidelines for pupils' interactions, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, the introduction of Dinosaur School has contributed successfully to pupils' understanding and gives good opportunities for them to express themselves. They increasingly show good understanding of their personal and social responsibilities. The school has established a good range of measures to promote health and has a satisfactory programme for sex education and drugs awareness.
94. Because of the secure community atmosphere, all pupils have equal opportunities and status, and show good respect for adults and each other. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to express their ideas and gain responsibilities. However, some of these moves, such as the school council, are at an early stage of development. Pupils are gaining greater understanding of their learning, such as through targets set from improving assessment information, although this is not yet sufficiently consistently done.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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