

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST KATHERINE'S SCHOOL**

Snodland

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118312

Headteacher: Mr A G Adams

Lead inspector: Mrs J Gill

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267843

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 412  
School address: St Katherine's Lane  
Snodland  
Kent  
Postcode: ME6 5EJ  
Telephone number: (01634) 240 061  
Fax number: (01634) 243 683  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr R Kingsbury  
governors:  
Date of previous 14<sup>th</sup> June 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Katherine's School is situated in Snodland, Kent. It is a disadvantaged area, where the socio-economic profile of the families is much lower than that found nationally. There is a much lower percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications in the community and significantly fewer pupils from minority ethnic homes. There are no looked-after children, refugees, asylum seekers or travellers in the school and the vast majority are white British. Currently, 412 pupils attend the school. There are significantly fewer boys than girls. The school has fewer pupils than at the time of the last inspection but is still larger than most primary schools. This decrease is mainly because of the aging local population. Pupil mobility is not a particular issue in the school; many of the pupils who start school in Reception stay until Year 6. There are 16 classes, three in Reception and Year 6 and two in each of the other year groups. Children enter Reception with attainment that is below average. It is often lower in personal, social and emotional development and language acquisition. This is because many children have low self-esteem and impoverished language development. This is similar to the previous inspection in 1999. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is currently around the national average. This has declined since the previous inspection because of changes in the allocation of benefits. Around 24 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. There are 64 children with special educational needs in Years 1 to 6; of these, seven have statements for their specific needs. There are a range of disabilities including specific, moderate and severe learning, speech, hearing and visual impairment and a couple with behavioural difficulties. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs has decreased since the last inspection because the school is more pro-active in addressing pupils' needs. This is through targeted specialist support, smaller classes and

rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. The school has been involved in national initiatives, including Primary Leadership Strategy and 'Leading From the Middle'. It is actively involved with the local Technology College in developing Digital Excellence; Greenwich University; and a special school for outreach work and instrumental tuition through Music for Schools Foundation. It provides a family-learning programme for the parents, which is popular and oversubscribed. In recognition of its achievement in the core subjects of English and mathematics, the school received the School Achievement Award in 2000/1 and has just recently had its Investors in People status validated again.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18706	Mrs J Gill	Lead inspector	Religious education The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
8991	Mrs P Goldsack	Lay inspector	
6169	Dr M Bradshaw	Team inspector	English Geography Personal, social and health education Physical education
13754	Mrs J Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Special educational needs
11976	Mrs H Toynbee	Team inspector	Science Art and design History

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>7 - 11</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11 - 17</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17 - 20</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>21 - 36</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>37</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Katherine's is a very good school.** A strong commitment to promoting high standards has ensured that standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. Pupils achieve much better results than pupils in similar schools. Standards have steadily risen since 2000. Inspection evidence indicates that similar standards are likely again this year. The headteacher is a very effective leader and manager and, with his staff, ensures that every child, regardless of ability, is fully included in all aspects of school life and receives excellent care. This means pupils enjoy coming to school and behave very well. They learn effectively from a below average start and achieve well. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 6.
- All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and manager, who, with his team, very strongly promote equality of opportunity; this helps pupils achieve well in all aspects of school life.
- The quality of teaching has improved, and is now good. Some is very good and inspirational and, with very effective support from teaching assistants, pupils learn effectively.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and behaviour management is very good, which strongly contributes to pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to school.
- There is excellent provision for care and support for all pupils.
- Accommodation and resources are very good, which contributes towards pupils' achievements.
- Pupils' speaking skills are below the standard expected throughout the school.
- The governors tend to rely on the headteacher too much for information about the school.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to work independently.
- Pupils have a limited awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity in today's British society.

The school has improved very well since the previous inspection. Areas of weakness have generally been tackled very well, although teachers still do not offer sufficient opportunities for independent learning activities. Standards have risen and are above average in many subjects. The quality of teaching has improved and is good throughout the school. Much better use is made of assessment data and work is well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly in English and mathematics. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved and is now very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004

English	C	E	B	A*
mathematics	A	C	C	A
science	A	B	B	A

*Key: A\* – very high; 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.*

**All pupils achieve well throughout the school.** Recent data confirms that the value the school adds to pupils' achievement from Year 2 to the end of Year 6 is very high. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils at St Katherine's achieved particularly well compared to similar schools. Year 2 pupils achieved above average results in reading, writing and mathematics, and in science, teacher assessment showed that pupils achieved average standards. In Year 6, standards in English and science were above the national average and in mathematics, they were average. When children enter Reception, attainment is below average, particularly in language development and social skills. Children achieve well and, by the end of Reception, many children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy, just a few are likely to achieve the goals. Inspection evidence indicates that in Year 2, pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and average standards in science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils' skills in reading and writing are above average, inspection evidence shows that their speaking skills are below those expected. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6 in information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of Years 2 and 6. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys and of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because provision is good and work is well matched to their prior ability. Higher attainers are sufficiently challenged and achieve well, as evident by the number who gain the higher levels in the tests.

Pupils' personal development is **good overall**, as their spiritual, moral, and social development is **very good** and their cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils have very positive attitudes to work and behave very well. Pupils' attendance is **good**, as at the time of the previous inspection.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.** Good teaching strongly contributes towards pupils' achievements in all aspects of school life. The very effective provision for pupils with a very wide range of special educational needs helps them to make good progress and integrate into school life. Assessment procedures are good overall but are very good in English, mathematics, science and special educational needs. They are at an early stage in many of the foundation subjects. The curriculum for all pupils throughout the school is good. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good, particularly in sporting and musical activities. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent. There are good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



**Leadership and management are good overall.** The headteacher is a very effective leader, with an excellent clarity of vision, and manages the school very well. The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to including all individuals in the life of the school and equality of opportunity for all. Self-evaluation is very good, which has a very positive impact on standards, which have risen since 2000. The leadership and management of other key staff are good overall, but very good in English, mathematics and special educational needs, which has helped towards higher standards. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body meets statutory requirements but it relies on the headteacher too much for information.

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

The school is very popular with parents and highly regarded. Pupils are extremely happy about all aspects of school life and agree that there is very little they would change, except, perhaps, for more time in the swimming pool. Inspection evidence fully supports these positive views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure pupils have even more planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to take part in independent learning activities.
- Increase the involvement of the governing body to ensure that they have an even greater grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Promote pupils' awareness of other cultures and ethnic and cultural diversity in British society.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement for all pupils throughout the school is **good**. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Children enter Reception with attainment that is below average. Although pupils' skills in reading and writing are above average by Year 2 and when they leave school at Year 6, their speaking skills are below those expected. This is a priority that has been acknowledged by the school. The headteacher and all staff have worked very effectively and with great determination to raise standards and to ensure that pupils achieve in all aspects of school life. This was clearly illustrated when results in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils dipped in 2003. Results were rigorously analysed and action taken which brought about a rise in 2004 which has continued, as confirmed by inspection evidence. Very good attention to all pupils' needs ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, have their needs met effectively, consequently they achieve well. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys or of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups.

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

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication and technology, music and physical education by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6.

- Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> achieve well in all areas of learning, from a low starting point, giving them a good start to their schooling.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils at St Katherine's achieve far better than pupils in similar schools<sup>2</sup>.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs, higher attainers and those few from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
- Pupils' speaking skills are below the standard expected.

## Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.4 (15.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (18.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, Year 2 pupils achieved above average results in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, pupils achieved very much better in reading and mathematics and better in writing. Teacher assessment in 2004 showed that pupils achieved average standards in science. The reason why grades are lower in science than in English and mathematics is that very few pupils gained the higher Level 3. These results indicate good achievement overall. When children enter the Foundation Stage, attainment is below average, in language and social skills it is often lower. Children achieve well and, by the end of Reception, are expected to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, creative development, some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. Overall, attainment in communication, language and literacy is below average, although higher attainment is evident.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (25.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.1 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.5 (29.4)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In the Year 6 2004 tests, standards in English and science were above average and in mathematics they were average, when compared nationally. However, when compared to pupils in similar schools, those at St Katherine's achieve well above that expected in mathematics and science and very highly in English. This is because the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above was above that usually expected in all subjects. In addition, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was above

<sup>1</sup> Foundation Stage – includes children from three-years-old to the end of Reception. The curriculum is set out under six areas of learning which leads into the National Curriculum when children enter Year 1.

<sup>2</sup> Schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

average for English and science but below average in mathematics. The value the school has added to pupils' performance from Year 2 to Year 6 was very high. Extensive analysis of test data by the headteacher and senior staff and thorough tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of progress take place. A variety of strategies are put into place to address individual and group needs, including pupils working in ability groups across the year groups in English and mathematics. This means that work is targeted accurately, as is reflected in the National Curriculum results. Pupils with special educational needs have very good provision and they achieve well; some achieve particularly well as is evident from the low percentage of pupils gaining the lower Level 3. More pupils gained the higher levels in 2004 than in the 2003 tests, thereby confirming that all pupils are being challenged sufficiently, including the higher-attaining pupils.

### *Inspection findings*

3. The majority of children enter the Reception classes with below average attainment. It is often lower in language development and social skills. There is a strong emphasis by all staff on the development of language, which helps children to communicate more effectively. Although they make good gains in communication, literacy and language, for many their attainment is still below that expected on entry into Year 1. Teachers have high expectations of the children's behaviour and their attitudes towards learning and are skilled at promoting personal, social and emotional development. This is helping children become independent, achieve well and enjoy their learning, which means that by the end of Reception, many will have achieved the early learning goals. By the end of Reception, the majority will have achieved, and some exceeded, the goals in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, particularly ICT, and creative and physical development.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and average in science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Although listening skills are above average, pupils' speaking skills throughout the school are below average; this is because they do not tend to use complex sentences and often have a restricted vocabulary. Since the school has identified speaking skills as a particular weakness, a range of strategies have been implemented. These are beginning to have an impact but not all teachers are effective at promoting speaking skills.
5. Teachers promote cross-curricular links very well in English. Pupils have very good opportunities to write in other subjects, which helps to develop their literacy skills. Plenty of opportunities are offered for pupils to write in different styles, at length and for different purposes in history, geography, religious education and science. There are examples of numeracy being used in science and history; however, from evidence in pupils' work and on displays, there is insufficient emphasis to developing numeracy skills across the curriculum. The use of ICT skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils confidently use ICT to support learning in a variety of subjects, including literacy, mathematics, science, history and music.
6. All pupils throughout the school achieve well. This is because the school very strongly promotes equality of opportunity and work is matched well for all pupils. The provision for educational inclusion is very good and has a marked impact on the learning and social development of all pupils. In addition, the data from effective tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is used well to inform planning. No significant differences

were noted between the performance of boys and girls. Attainment of pupils with special educational needs is below national expectations but it reflects their varying abilities and particular needs. Progress throughout the school is good because of the very good and clear identification of pupils and the planning for these pupils in the core subjects. There is good support from teaching assistants, both one-to-one and in-group activities. The number of pupils with special educational needs has declined since the last inspection; this is because of the improved identification procedures and the fact that many have made very good progress. The school has been successful in ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are given good opportunities to succeed in their learning. They are obviously being challenged well, as is evident from the high percentage attaining the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests and borne out by the inspection evidence.

7. In the foundation subjects<sup>3</sup>, with the exception of design and technology and geography where a judgement could not be made, standards are at least in line with those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. In ICT, music and physical education, standards are above those expected. This is due to particularly good resources and accommodation for these subjects and effective teaching. Religious education makes a particularly positive contribution to pupils' personal development; they achieve well and reach standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 that are in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus and national guidance.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Overall, pupils' personal development is **good**, as their spiritual, moral, and social development is **very good** and their cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attendance is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are enthusiastic hard-working participants in lessons and in extra activities.
- Pupils thrive in this very orderly and vibrant community and share the school's high expectations regarding behaviour.
- Spiritual awareness is developed very well and pupils have a very good awareness for others and appreciation for learning.
- Unsatisfactory provision to promote pupils' awareness of other cultures and ethnic and cultural diversity in British society.

### **Commentary**

8. Children in the Foundation Stage have settled very well to the daily routines of school. They are very happy to come to school and enjoy the facilities on offer. Overall attainment on entry in personal, social and emotional development is below average. As a result of good teaching and consistent behaviour management, children behave very well, make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Reception, the majority are likely to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. Children relate very well to staff, who show great care and consideration for them. Teachers are successful in helping children gain in independence and confidence and in the ability to share and take turns.

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<sup>3</sup> Foundation subjects include art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and PE.

9. All pupils, regardless of ability or gender, are fully included in all aspects of the school. Pupils' very positive attitudes have been maintained since the last inspection and contribute very well to their attainment. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and work in lessons with great enthusiasm. They are very interested in their work and try hard to do well. After-school clubs and sports activities are very well supported. Homework is completed as assigned and many pupils in Years 5 and 6 commit to attending after-school homework club each Friday. The responses in pupils' and parents' questionnaires confirm that pupils like school very much. Pupils with special educational needs are positive in their responses in the classrooms, or when in small groups supported by a teaching assistant. They integrate into the class well and work happily as part of a small or large groups. Standards of behaviour are the same as other pupils in the school, which is very good.
10. As at the last inspection, pupils continue to behave very well. Their very good moral development adds to the school's very positive atmosphere for learning. The school's positive approach to discipline is very successful and pupils enjoy earning house points each week. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and benefit from the high number of interesting and challenging lessons. Even in a Year 4 class where lessons lacked pace and challenge, pupils remained polite and only appeared to fidget or chat now and then. There has been one exclusion for misbehaviour over the last reporting year and issues regarding this have been resolved. Parents and pupils are very pleased with the quality of behaviour.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
372	1	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0

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

11. The very good relationships found within the school are reflected in the positive way that pupils treat each other. Pupils' very good social development is promoted very well and older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones in the playground. There are no problems concerning racism or bullying. Parents agree that their children are encouraged to become mature. The School Council meets regularly and their classmates elect councillors. This is a successful forum where pupils voice their opinions about how the school can be improved. Concerns about self-discipline that were mentioned in the previous report were addressed well by the creation of the School Council and encouraging discussions in lessons. There is still scope to extend independent learning activities, such as research in the library or working in groups on their own, for these well-behaved and reliable pupils.
12. Provision for spiritual development has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a very good range of planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and consider the needs of others. Worthwhile assemblies with relevant themes allow pupils to consider

issues that relate to them, such as making friends, keeping healthy and growing up with siblings. Pupils display empathy for those less fortunate by raising funds for charity, such as Children in Need, and writing about how they hope other children will benefit.

13. There is a good programme of visitors, class trips and school events, particularly related to music, to provide pupils with a good understanding of British and Western European culture. Subjects such as religious education, art and music contribute well to their awareness of western culture. However, the school is not providing pupils with an awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity in today's British society. Consequently pupils have very little awareness of cultural traditions other than their own.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. Pupils' attendance remains good and continues to be slightly better than the national figure. Pupils arrive promptly each morning. The school has improved its arrangements to promote prompt regular attendance very successfully by appointing a member of staff to act as in-house education welfare officer (EWO). Parents are continually reminded about the importance of attendance and are discouraged from taking holidays during term time. The school's EWO works closely with parents to help them overcome any difficulties that might affect their children's attendance rate.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The curriculum is good and there is very good enrichment through opportunities in sports and the arts. Accommodation and resources are very good, but the number of teaching assistants is satisfactory. All staff strongly contribute towards the very positive ethos, meaning that pupils are extremely well cared for. Links with parents and the community are good.

**Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There are significant strengths in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good overall and pupils' progress is tracked effectively and action taken to address individual and school needs.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good, which has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- The very high quality of teaching assistants strongly contributes to the achievements and inclusion of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour management is very good; pupils respond by behaving very well and they have extremely positive attitudes towards learning.

- Teachers promote equality of opportunity very well; this means that pupils with special educational needs, higher-attaining pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are taught well.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to work independently.
- Assessment procedures in English, mathematics, science and special educational needs are very good and in the Foundation Stage, they are good. They are at an early stage in many other subjects.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 66 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	14 (21.2%)	35 (53%)	15 (22.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The table above indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. There is a very much higher percentage of good teaching since the last inspection. Teaching has improved throughout the school and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the inspection, unlike the previous inspection, when ten per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Weaknesses previously included lack of subject knowledge in some subjects, such as in religious education, a slow pace and insufficient challenge in some lessons. Also, pupils were not given enough opportunities to work independently. This is still often the case; for example, pupils do not regularly use the library to develop their independent research skills.
16. Effective strategies have been put into place to bring about improvement, including greater monitoring by the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators and strong links between performance management and continuing professional development. In addition, some teachers have taken part in national leadership programmes – ‘leading from the middle’. Teaching assistants are also well trained, which contributes to their effectiveness. Teachers’ subject knowledge has improved; they are now knowledgeable when teaching religious education and make learning about world religions interesting to pupils. Teachers are confident and effective in teaching ICT and using their skills to enhance pupils’ learning, particularly the recently-installed interactive whiteboards. Specialist teaching in music, and high quality accommodation for physical education, particularly for swimming, contribute strongly to higher standards that pupils reach in these subjects. Teachers offer higher-attaining pupils greater challenge now, particularly in English and mathematics, where pupils are grouped by ability across the year groups. This means work is carefully matched to pupils’ prior ability and coupled with teachers’ high expectations; all pupils succeed, as is evident by the high percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels in the national tests. However, there are occasional incidents, such as in a Year 4 English lesson, when more able pupils were not challenged sufficiently to produce more or better work.



17. Teachers are aware of individuals' with specific difficulties and needs. In literacy and numeracy, they are taught as a group within the lower set for each year. They are supported effectively by teaching assistants who are very well trained. Work is matched well to pupils' prior ability. Sometimes, should a problem be identified, the curriculum is modified so that these pupils can access the lesson. As an example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, while the class concentrated on adding small sums of money, the lower-attaining group's lesson concentrated on ensuring that pupils in the group could quickly add numbers to 10. In other subjects, teachers adopt strategies in order that pupils with literacy problems can record their work.
18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with significant strengths, particularly in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development, where all staff are insistent that children reach high standards of behaviour. This effectively contributes to children gaining independence, learning to choose their own activities and tidying up their work areas. The co-ordinator promotes very strong teamwork and staff work effectively to provide a stimulating and interesting learning environment, both inside the classroom and in the outside area.
19. The headteacher is totally committed to ensuring all pupils are fully included in all aspects of learning. His lead is adopted by all staff, which means pupils are given the support they need. The effective deployment of the teaching assistants and the high quality of their work make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements, both academically and socially. Pupils have opportunities to work in small groups with adult support which helps all pupils access the same learning opportunities. There is good consistency of curriculum content between each of the year groups, which also ensures very good equality of opportunity for all pupils. Learning objectives are better shared with pupils now, as observed in some science lessons.
20. Very good relationships and an insistence on high standards of behaviour mean pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy their lessons and behave very well. The orderly sense of purpose in the classrooms and throughout the school contributes strongly to the very positive ethos. Teachers are supported very well through effective whole-school systems for behaviour management. There are, however, occasional lapses in the concentration of a few junior pupils in a minority of lessons, which is linked to their sitting too long through introductions to lessons and when the pace of the lesson slows.
21. Assessment in Years 1 to 6 is good overall. The school has improved its assessment procedures. Teachers now use assessment and evaluation from planning, both formal and informal, to inform the next steps in learning. Assessment is very good in English, mathematics, science and special educational needs. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and test data effectively analysed to identify those that need extra support or greater challenge in their work. For example, the curriculum had been adjusted effectively in writing by setting across year groups, which has contributed towards higher standards. Assessment procedures have recently been introduced for the foundation subjects and are satisfactory at present. The systems look manageable but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.
22. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are good. The school follows procedures based on the recommended guidance for the six areas of learning.

Information is collected initially from some playgroups and parents' comments at induction meetings. There is an effective range of assessment procedures based on detailed observations, tick-sheets and staff noting significant achievements. These feed into the Foundation Stage profile, which is updated regularly during the year and finalised at the end of Reception. Photographs are used well to illustrate children's achievements and also contribute to the profile.

23. There are very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. A tutor supports pupils with statements and advises the teaching assistants in finding and achieving the right resources. The tutor also undertakes assessments. Pupils' needs are identified when they enter the school and through the intervening years. Through the school's very good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and well-organised individual education plans, effective arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. Pupils' records are well maintained and organised and provide a clear picture of pupils' progress.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good progress has been made in developing an imaginative and innovative curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Good improvement has meant that provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Very good opportunities are available for pupils to become involved in sport and the arts.
- Accommodation and resources, such as books and equipment, are very good, but the number of teaching assistants is only satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

24. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including the requirements for religious education and collective worship, and is good overall. This is an improvement over the previous inspection, when collective worship did not meet requirements. The amount of taught time in the juniors has been increased since the previous inspection and this has helped to improve the curricular balance. The school has begun to develop and extend the curriculum, with the clearly stated aim of improving innovation. A good start has been made. The curriculum has interest and excitement for pupils. The use of groupings based on attainment levels (setting) in English and mathematics has had a positive effect in enabling teachers to match the curriculum more closely to pupils' individual needs. Grouping pupils within their class sets enhances this provision further. The present curriculum gains from some specialist teaching in music. In addition, all pupils in the school have the opportunity to swim during the year in the school's own swimming pool. This has a positive impact on standards. The school day is very carefully managed to ensure that no time is lost, although some of the short half-hour sessions, especially in physical education, are not very effective. The curriculum for the children in Reception classes is good. It is well planned around the recommended areas of learning. As for other children, all have the chance to swim. Good arrangements are in place to enable children to make a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. The overall good quality of the curriculum prepares pupils effectively for the next stages in their education.

25. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good and has improved since the previous inspection, when there was no formal programme. The programme includes specific taught lessons and there is a strong thrust in ensuring that PSHE is intrinsic to all that the school does. The co-ordinator expects that all staff identify, with coloured stickers, when an aspect of PSHE will be covered within a planned subject lesson. The assembly programme also promotes many features of PSHE. The co-ordinator ensures that sex and relationships education and drug misuse are covered through the PSHE and science programmes.
26. Provision for special educational needs is very good. Pupils work in ability groups in literacy and numeracy but, in mixed ability groups in other subjects sometimes supported by the teacher or by a teaching assistant. There is very good individual support for pupils with statements, either within in a group or on a one-to-one basis. All pupils have full access to the National Curriculum. Individual needs are defined and targets set to meet needs in their individual education plan (IEPs). The school has successfully implemented a policy of full inclusion of all pupils. The class teacher makes suitable arrangements for adapting the curriculum as appropriate, based on pupils' termly and annual reviews.
27. The transition from the Reception class to Year 1 is good. Children have opportunities to meet with their new teacher to aid the transfer. The school ensures that records and data are passed on from Reception. The transition from primary to secondary school is well organised, despite the difficulties of pupils transferring to up to 12 different schools, including several grammar schools. Good links have been established with the local technology college to which most pupils transfer. These links include strong curricular links through science, design and technology and ICT. Good links with a wide range of local schools also help curricular development and continuity.
28. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. There is a very good range of after-school clubs. Opportunities for participation in a range of sports and in the arts are included. After-school clubs begin in Reception when, during the autumn term, parents and children use the swimming pool to help children gain confidence in the water; the club is appropriately known as 'The Duckling Club'. Pupils in Year 2 join a games club during the summer term. In the juniors, a very wide range of opportunities is provided, which covers a wide range of the curriculum. They include recorders, band, chess, poetry, art, computer, environment, newspaper, football, netball and choir. All these are well attended. In addition, breakfast and homework clubs enable pupils to extend their formal academic studies. Pupils visit a range of local sites, including museums, churches, the choral society and the local environment. Year 6 pupils can also join in a residential trip, and theatre groups visit the school. The one omission is that the religious education work does not include visits to places of worship other than Christian churches. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated fully into all activities and benefit from the standards for personal development set by the school. Social integration is very successful. They also have very good opportunities to take part in all activities, clubs and day and residential visits.
29. Innovative developments within the curriculum are evident and are especially seen in displays around the school, which are imaginative and stimulating. They demonstrate the richness of the curriculum, and the strong links that are made between many

subjects. Literacy and ICT skills are used to especially good effect and the importance of PSHE is evident in much of the work.

30. The school is well staffed, with a good number of teachers, so that class sizes are relatively small in both Reception and the juniors. There is a good mix of experienced and recently trained teachers, who work together well as a team. The number of teaching assistants is quite low and only satisfactory. The length of time these assistants work is quite short, and many classes do not benefit from support throughout the school day.
31. The school is housed in two connecting buildings that provide very generous and comfortable accommodation for pupils and staff. The very high quality of the learning environment helps to support pupils well. Behaviour is enhanced very well because pupils are never cramped and have enough room to play and work in groups comfortably. Learning is enriched for pupils as they benefit from lessons taught in the library and ICT suite and specialist rooms for art and design and music. The accommodation for physical education is very good and includes an enclosed swimming pool, generous sports fields and two large hard surface play areas.
32. Resources throughout the school are plentiful and very well cared for. The computerised lending system means that all equipment is easily available for teachers and storage arrangements are first-rate. The library included an ample stock of fiction and non-fiction books and there are additional books for home reading in classrooms. There is a new reading scheme and the stock of books has improved since the last inspection. The music room is very well supplied with a variety of instruments. Learning is well supported by the very good quality of resources available to suit all pupils' needs.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **excellent**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils are cared for as individuals and the school is pro-active in meeting the needs of its pupils.
- Very good relationships ensure that pupils have at least one adult they can confide in.
- Very good support for learning and personal development.

### **Commentary**

33. The school consistently provides the highest standard of care to ensure pupils' wellbeing. Arrangements for pupils' care are even better than they were at the last inspection. Premises governors carry out risk assessments of the site regularly and year group leaders complete risk assessments for each trip. There is an ample number of staff trained to administer first aid. Pupils with allergies or ailments or who require first aid are very well cared for. The headteacher is the designated teacher responsible for child protection. The school follows its

own policy on child protection and the headteacher makes sure that all staff members are up to date with training and awareness in this area.

#### **Excellent provision for care, welfare, health and safety**

The headteacher leads by example in providing outstanding care and support for pupils in this large primary school. Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff members all know the pupils very well. The headteacher is tireless in his pursuit of extra support from outside agencies to meet the specific needs of pupils and their families. The headteacher recognised the need for extra support for some pupils and wisely appointed two staff members to take on the roles of in-house education welfare officer and family liaison officer. The continuing good attendance rate and the happiness of the children confirm the success of this arrangement. Very well planned systems that are consistently followed ensure the smooth running of the school day and result in a warm and productive environment. Pupils are very happy and agree that there is very little they would change, except, perhaps, for more time in the swimming pool. Comments added to the inspection questionnaire by a Year 1 pupil, summarised the views of others, thus: they are happy "because of all the nice people in the school".

34. Teachers are very well aware of pupils' progress in subjects and in their personal development. All teachers maintain careful records on progress and share this information with parents at consultation meetings and in the end-of-year reports. Results from a variety of tests help teachers to plan very well for the next step in learning for each pupil. Pupils are taught mathematics and English in ability sets and this contributes to their attainment. The school recognises that a number of pupils have difficulties speaking confidently and clearly. In response, they are working through the Social Use of Language Programme (SULP).
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the care and support for all pupils is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils they work with very well. The supportive caring ethos of the school and its respect for the value of all individuals ensure that pupils with special educational needs have very good opportunities to take part in all school activities, including clubs.
36. On entry into the Reception classes, all pupils' level of attainment is assessed and their performance is monitored as part of ongoing observation and assessment throughout their school career. Information from foundation profiles, parental interviews and, where applicable, pre-school settings is collated to ensure the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The school's in-house tracking system is also a valuable tool to measure the attainment of pupils with special educational needs in relation to targets and peers. Support and advice is also sought and followed from outside agencies such as Pupil Support Services, Educational Psychology and Health Services.
37. The school values its pupils' ideas and the School Council enables pupils to express their opinions and work together. Recent improvements on the playground, whereby designated older pupils make sure everyone has someone to play with, resulted from ideas put forward in the School Council. Pupils also join in discussions on relevant topics during lessons in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils work hard to earn house points and are rewarded during the awards assembly each week. Pupils' achievements outside school are also highlighted during assemblies. Pupils' original work is celebrated in attractive displays throughout the school.

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

The school's links with parents are **good**. Links with the community and other schools are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very popular with its parents.

### **Commentary**

38. The good partnership between the school and parents and the community has been maintained since the last inspection. The school is highly regarded by parents, which is confirmed by those who made their views known during the inspection. The quality of information provided for parents is good and helps to support the partnership between home and school well. The prospectus and governors' annual report contain all of the required information in a parent-friendly format. Pupils' end-of-year reports fully meet requirements and clearly inform parents about pupils' progress in each subject. They include targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science and provide a very good summary of each pupil's personal development over the year. Newsletters help to keep parents fully informed about school life and these are also posted on the school's website. However, the information about the curriculum to be studied each term is too brief to guide parents about what their children will be studying.
39. Effective links are established before children start in the Reception classes. Children have opportunities to visit their classrooms before they start at school. Inductions meeting for parents are held to inform them about routines. As a result of these early links, children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly to the daily routines and enjoy the happy, caring atmosphere at this early stage in their education.
40. The school values its link with parents and welcomes their opinions. For example, the school carried out its own survey and adapted the school dress code to allow girls to wear trousers. The school has acted to set up specialist meetings such as that on literacy and with the school nurse. Despite the schools' efforts, parental participation in these events was small. The Family Learning sessions for parents of younger pupils are well attended and productive. Small groups of parents agree to participate in a series of workshops to help learn more about supporting their children with homework. Questionnaire results confirm that parents are comfortable about approaching the school. The Parents' Association is active in fundraising and social events and contributes to providing extra resources. A number of parents volunteer to help with reading for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2.
41. The school is committed to a partnership with all parents, including those with children with special education needs. The headteacher, who is the special educational needs co-ordinator, oversees the provision for pupils with special educational needs. He is available for discussions with parents and undertakes the overall organisation as he feels he has very good access to other agencies that might be involved. Parents are included and are informed of termly reviews and are aware of the targets set for their individual child. Pupils are aware of targets, some of which they set themselves.
42. The school enjoys good support from the local community and this helps to enrich learning experiences for the pupils. There are regular visits to nearby Christ Church and local clergy often lead assemblies. The school choir performs at a local home for

the elderly and at Rochester Cathedral. Pupils also perform in local musical festivals and compete in sports competitions.

43. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the good link with nearby Holmesdale Technology College. They participate in shared activities in science, design and technology, and mathematics. The school makes good arrangements for the transfer of Year 6 pupils to secondary schools. The school maintains links with more than 12 different schools. The headteacher meets with all parents of Year 6 pupils to discuss the options available and inform them about the details regarding transfer and the testing requirements of some schools. Pupils and parents attend open days at the schools they are interested in. It is difficult to improve provision in this area, due to the large number of secondary schools involved.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good and governance is satisfactory.** As at the last inspection, the contribution of the headteacher to the leadership and management of the school is very good. Leadership by other key staff is good. Very effective management systems are in place. The judgement on governance must be seen in the context of a governing body that fulfils its statutory duties well and plays a significant role in supporting the work of the school. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and members of staff.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high expectations shown by the headteacher.
- Good leadership by other key staff.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to including all individuals in the life of the school and equality of opportunity for all.
- There is a very clear, informative system of self-evaluation, which has a very positive impact on standards.
- Financial planning is expertly carried out and there is very careful monitoring of the school budget, with great care being taken to ensure best value.
- The governors are formed into effective sub-committees and, through these, support the school well.
- Opportunities for governors to play a more active role in getting to know the school's strengths and weaknesses through first-hand experience are still inadequate.
- Governors are given insufficient opportunities to take part in the early formulation of the school improvement plan, although they are consulted at later stages.

### **Commentary**

44. The headteacher's very strong and effective leadership, identified at the time of the previous inspection, has been maintained. He provides a highly personal, hard-working, clear and direct steer to all the work in the school. He is fully committed to providing the best for all pupils in every aspect of school life. The school has carried out a rigorous self-evaluation of its work, including sending out a questionnaire to parents. From this, it has been able to make its own very clear and well-informed

identification of strengths and areas which need improvement. The actions taken in response to this evaluation have had a very positive impact on standards in the school.

45. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher's commitment has been a significant factor in successfully meeting the key issues raised in the last report. A very detailed analysis is now made of pupils' performance data and this is usefully employed in setting individual targets and in tracing trends. Until recently, the monitoring of teaching and learning was developing well and the impact of this is shown in the good teaching now taking place throughout the school. Whilst such monitoring is still good in English, it has been put in abeyance in other subjects. This is due to the current impact of maternity leave upon staffing, leading to too few teachers in post to release co-ordinators to observe classroom teaching and learning in lessons. This reduces co-ordinators' influence on important aspects of their monitoring work. Very good procedures for assessment in the core subjects are now in place and the results are used to make informed planning decisions. Assessment is still inadequate in other areas of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, accommodation and resources have been greatly enhanced and are very good. The school is now a very effective learning environment, which is greatly valued by parents and pupils.
46. The headteacher is well supported by the school's senior management team and staff with management responsibilities. The role of co-ordinators has been widened since the last report and they now bid for, and spend, their own budgets. This gives co-ordinators greater ownership of their aspects and subjects and increases their impact upon the quality of provision. Co-ordinators work to clear job descriptions and action plans and usefully report to the governors about how successful they have been in meeting their targets. These evaluative reports contribute to governors' satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Curriculum co-ordinators, year group leaders and other key staff play an important part in establishing very effective teaching teams and, in their different spheres of learning, this has a significant effect upon pupils' standards and their enjoyment of the school. The Foundation Stage team is a good example. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the post but has already established a strong team spirit. Her leadership and management are good and she gives effective support and encouragement to other staff. Staff induction procedures are very good. Extensive explanatory paperwork about the school is provided prior to taking up post. Together with the year group planning system and the school's mentorship programme, this gives newly-qualified teachers and other staff new to the school great support and eases their entry into the life of the school.
47. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher, has ensured that the teaching assistants are well trained and now have greater responsibility for pupils with special educational needs. Resources are well matched to individual needs. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is lower since the last inspection because the school has successfully identified pupils early and provided them with very good support, which has helped them to make good progress.
48. Many members of the governing body know the school well. Some offer a particularly good expertise which is very useful in their work. Governors talk enthusiastically about what they do and their commitment to the school. The chair of governors has a strong



working relationship with the headteacher and his knowledge of the local area and his long connections with the school are invaluable. The governing body ensures that the school fully meets its statutory responsibilities and that all appropriate policies are in place. Members have been formed into efficient sub-committees, which greatly support the school in its work. The headteacher and members of staff keep them well informed about school issues. However, there is no structured programme of visits to classrooms which would give governors an even greater grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The take-up of governor training is disappointing in view of the fact that the school pays a subscription towards this each year. Opportunities are missed to increase knowledge and understanding about governance and education in general and to share, and learn from, the ideas of other governors from different schools. The headteacher does not involve the governors in the initial formulation of the school improvement plan, although they have ample opportunity to discuss and query the draft before the plan reaches its final stage. The headteacher, all staff and governors are fully committed to providing an environment in which every individual is included in the life of the school and, in this way, reach his or her full potential.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,049,726
Total expenditure	1,063,358
Expenditure per pupil	2,562

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	291,269
Balance carried forward to the next year	277,637

49. The financial management of the school is very good and the specialist knowledge of the governor who oversees finances is a great asset to the school. Due to historical factors, the school has operated with a very large rollover budget for a considerable number of years. Prudent, yet thoughtful, prioritising of expenditure has continued to add to this sum. At the same time, the school has been able to meet the majority of its educational priorities such as the establishment of a library, music room and computer suite. A large sum within this rollover is earmarked to provide help in building a Nursery on the same site. The establishment of such a facility is seen to be of great benefit both to the local community and the school. This will still leave the school with a greater than customary carry-forward to the following year. Specific grants, for instance for the support of pupils with special educational needs, are used very well for their designated purpose.
50. The school day runs very smoothly and efficiently because of the highly efficient finance and office staff. The finance administrator usefully updates the governors and the senior management team, of which she is a member, as to the current situation with regard to budget spending. The school always looks very carefully for best value when making purchases and goes out to tender in cases where larger sums are involved. The value for money provided by the school is very good.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved well since the last inspection. There is now a secure outside area where children access all areas of learning through a combination of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. The curriculum has improved and children follow the early learning goals throughout the Foundation Stage, and now personal, social and emotional development is included specifically in the planning. Literacy and numeracy are taught in a more

appropriate manner and incorporate a range of activities, including role play and ICT, both in the classrooms and in the outside area. The staff work hard to make all areas attractive and stimulating learning environments, and this strongly contributes to children's good achievement. The children enter Reception full-time with attainment that is below average. It is often lower in language development and social skills. However, all children, including those with special educational needs, are very effectively included in all aspects of the curriculum by the teachers and well-trained and experienced support staff. Teaching is good and teachers quickly gain a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children; and consequently, the children settle quickly to school routines. Children achieve well in Reception and make good gains in their learning; however, there are some children who are not likely to achieve the early learning goals, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development and some aspects in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Overall, however, attainment is still below average on entry to Year 1.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good because all staff have very high expectations with regard to good behaviour and positive attitudes towards work and play.
- Children are encouraged to become independent and select their own activities.
- All children are very effectively included in all aspects of the curriculum, which helps those with special educational needs to achieve well.

### **Commentary**

51. Children achieve well and make a good start in developing appropriate skills in this area of learning. This is due to effective learning situations and good teaching. Children in all classes are very well-behaved and this reflects the high expectations from all the staff. By the end of Reception, the majority are likely to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. Children are very happy and settled and, through a good combination of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, they gain in confidence and learn to share, take turns and play co-operatively with one another. The great majority of pupils change independently for physical education and into their outdoor boots and coats without help; a few need help with buttons. Teachers are keen to ensure that the children become self-sufficient and many are looking after their own needs well. Children behave very well in the large and small halls and are encouraged to listen carefully to instructions, which they do well.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged and supported sensitively to verbalise their thoughts and actively listen to the staff and their peers.
- There is good promotion and enjoyment of books through a variety of directed and child-selected tasks.
- There are good opportunities for children to learn the basic skills of writing and reading.

## Commentary

52. Teaching is good. There is a strong emphasis on improving standards in language development. This is essential, as there are a significant number of children entering school with poorly developed speech and language skills and a limited vocabulary. The development of speaking is a whole-school priority and is promoted well in the Foundation Stage. Teachers effectively intervene during activities and promote specific language and model correct responses, as in their role-play when children were collecting and having their lunch on a fire engine! This is helping to extend children's vocabulary. All staff encourage children to explain what they have been doing during activities and review sessions. Children achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Reception, a few will meet the goals, although many will not. Nevertheless, this still represents good achievement from a low starting point.
53. There is good promotion of reading through dedicated reading and library sessions, during which children learn to handle books carefully and develop awareness about the features of books. In the library, children enjoy selecting books and are encouraged to tell the class about the book they have looked at. The teacher is very supportive and uses questioning well to help children express themselves. It is at such times that it is evident that their language development is below that expected, as they tend to answer in phrases rather than sentences; however, it is clear that children enjoy books. Higher-attaining children are beginning to read simple text, but all children have a good awareness of books and are fully aware that print carries meaning. In the children's workbooks, there are examples of a wide range of literacy skills, from the very early stages of writing development with children making marks, to recognisable letters, names and simple words.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff effectively promote mathematical vocabulary through a wide range of activities both in the classroom and outside areas.
- Effective teaching methods, including singing number rhymes, make learning fun.

## Commentary

54. Teaching and learning are good, which helps children achieve well. By the end of Reception, many will have attained the early learning goals in mathematical

development. There are good opportunities for children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts both in the classrooms and the outside area. Children are encouraged to discuss the sequencing of events and act out getting up in the morning and getting ready for the day. Children have fun as the teacher carries out the actions with the children. Practical tasks such as this contribute towards children gaining correct mathematical vocabulary.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to learn from direct experience, which captures their interest.
- Children show an interest and competence in using computers.
- There is a good range of activities, including in the outside play area.

### **Commentary**

55. Children achieve well from a poor initial knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Teaching is good and often imaginative, which captures children's interest. This means that by the end of Reception, many, including those with special educational needs, will have achieved the early learning goals. In a very good lesson, children learn to use directions to help find Leo the Lion, who is lost. The teacher uses questioning very effectively to help children find clues to find where Leo might be. They excitedly find him in the music room. Back in the classroom, some children produce a map, while other children work outside together to make a route using bricks. Children enjoy using the computers; they are confident and work well together. They control the mouse well, select the next program and drag icons across the screen and place them appropriately. They use the computer suite and develop their computer skills by creating their own portraits and pictures using a graphics program. When in the classroom, they spontaneously use the computers to create other pictures of themselves.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have a good range of opportunities for all aspects of physical development.
- There is a secure outside play area which gives children opportunities to play and develop their physical skills. In addition, children use the halls for physical development.

### **Commentary**

56. Children have good opportunities to play and exercise outside in a secure environment. Teaching and learning are good, which helps children achieve well in

physical development. By the end of Reception, the majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. There have been good improvements in the provision of an outside area for the Reception children. They now have access to all Foundation Stage areas, including physical development through child-initiated and teacher-directed activities in the outside area. Physical lessons in the halls were well planned and much enjoyed by the children. There is good attention to appropriate warming-up exercise and attention to changes in the body following exercise. Teachers encourage children to say how their heart feels following an energetic warm-up – *'it is jumping faster'*. Children balance on beams and travel along them with good control, they concentrate well and try to improve their movements. The more cautious children have very good support from the staff; this helps them to access the lesson well. In another lesson, children listen carefully to music and move imaginatively. They manage to depict a fierce lion, which some do extremely well. In the classroom and the outside garden, the children's use of simple tools is developing well when they have the opportunities to dig, and to use glue spreaders, scissors, paintbrushes and pencils.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good promotion of role-play, which helps children use their imagination effectively.
- Specialist teaching in music significantly contributes towards children's achievement.
- Children are encouraged to use a good range of media.

### **Commentary**

57. Teaching is good and this helps children make good progress. Consequently, by the end of Reception, many are likely to achieve the early learning goals. In all classes, they enjoy playing in the role-play areas. They have good opportunities to use their imagination as well as use their literacy skills. Good intervention by the staff helps to extend children's ideas and develop appropriate language. Children are building up a good repertoire of songs and rhymes and gaining skills in using instruments in their lessons in the Music Room. They are extremely well-behaved during their lesson. The instruments are set out around the room and not a single child touched the instruments until they were told they could. They sing tunefully with great enthusiasm and join in with the actions. Many of them already know how to hold the instruments appropriately. They listen carefully to the teacher and repeat sound patterns using a variety of instruments. Music is used effectively to signal clearing-up time in the classroom.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of pupils is good, and attainment is above average.
- Teaching is good and sets are used effectively to promote writing skills.
- Pupils' speaking skills are below the standard expected.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced and English is used well in other subjects.
- The leadership, management and assessment of English are very good.

### **Commentary**

58. Pupils' achievement in English is good throughout the school. Since the year 2000, the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven show that, with the exception of 2003, attainment was average or better. In 2003, results were well below average, but reflected the particular characteristics of that group of pupils. The results in 2004 improved to above average, and this represented exceptional progress from pupils' attainment in Year 2. Over a third of pupils attained a high standard, above that expected. The results of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds show pupils reach standards above the national average in reading and writing. This is in line with similar results since 2001, following a significant increase over the results in 2000. Inspection findings show that the current pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining above average standards, although speaking skills are below this. Achievement of pupils is good overall, and that of pupils with special educational needs is very good and reflected in the small number who failed to achieve at least the expected Level 2 in reading and writing in Year 2 or Level 4 in Year 6. The grouping of pupils in each year group into sets according to their attainment ensures that teachers can match the work very closely to each pupil's needs.
59. Standards in listening are above average across the school, but speaking skills are below average. In all lessons and assemblies, pupils listened well and took interest. On the occasions when other pupils in their class were speaking aloud, pupils usually listened closely. The school has identified speaking skills as a particular weakness which is evident when children start school. A range of strategies, including drama, has been put in place to overcome the weaknesses. On occasions, teachers encourage paired discussion during English lessons followed by a whole-class discussion; this was particularly effective in a class containing a number of pupils with special educational needs. Opportunities to speak aloud in assemblies are also being developed. Teachers use questions to encourage longer replies than pupils generally give. However, there is inconsistency in the use of these procedures. Too often, teachers do not develop speaking skills sufficiently and, when questions are asked, only those with their hands up are invited to answer. In some older junior classes, the teacher sometimes reads out a piece of text aloud, rather than asking a pupil to do so. Pupils lack confidence to use complex sentences when speaking aloud. Speaking skills remain below the standard expected throughout the school, but are improving.
60. Standards in reading are above average in both the infants and juniors. Teachers promote reading well and, from an early age, pupils begin to acquire a love of books and reading. All the pupils spoken to take books home regularly, and read them to a parent or other relative. Pupils enjoy reading fiction, including poetry, and those in Year 6 are clear about their favourite authors and summarise well some of the books they have read. Reading records are used very effectively to communicate with parents, to record the extent of pupils' reading outside school and as a means of

monitoring pupils' progress. This contributes significantly to the good achievement of pupils in reading. Pupils across the school read a wide range of books and, by the age of eleven, pupils are confident, fluent and expressive readers. At times, lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, read accurately, but without always understanding some of the words they have read. These pupils do not, as a matter of course, check the meaning of such words in a dictionary or by asking their teacher. Year 2 pupils are making good progress in developing and using a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection by the purchase of a new and, pupils say, interesting reading scheme. A very well stocked library, with books that are carefully arranged according to levels of difficulty, aids learning. There is a good range of non-fiction books, which is catalogued and arranged by a part-time librarian. The development of research skills is seen as an area for further development. Although pupils in Year 6 understand the Dewey classification system used and the importance of contents and index pages, pupils do not regularly use the library on their own and this limits the development of independent research skills.

61. The use of ability sets within each year group is having a positive effect on developing pupils' writing skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the use of sets, careful grouping within the classes and support from teachers and teaching assistants. Similarly, higher-attaining pupils are challenged well and make good progress. In Years 2 and 6, standards in writing are above the national average. In Year 6, pupils' writing often uses complex sentences to express what they mean. They include interesting vocabulary in order to improve their writing, but this is not consistently carried over into their speaking. Pupils use a good range of punctuation accurately and their knowledge of grammar is good. Pupils' handwriting skills are above average, although a small number of pupils still use print, even as late as Year 4. The use of word-processing supports the development of writing, and pupils use it to enter and correct text, including spelling. Spelling standards are about average. Pupils are introduced to a range of spelling strategies, but errors in pupils' written work often reflect how they speak.
62. The quality of teaching is good, with some examples of teaching that are very good or excellent. In an exceptional lesson in Year 5, the lower set of pupils, which included a number with special educational needs, was captivated when learning about the use of instructions. The text linked to science and pupils thoroughly enjoyed following the instructions to charge a balloon with static electricity, once they had risen to the challenge of identifying the imperative verb used by the teacher. The discussion that followed made pupils stop and reflect on how small an atom actually is. Very good use of the interactive whiteboard followed as pupils rearranged a set of instructions related to planting seeds. The teacher took great care to include the full range of pupils within the class in these activities. In Year 6, more able pupils were very well taught about biography and autobiography and the differences in writing styles. Year 2 pupils made good progress in developing simple writing of instructional text, such as the production of an Eid card. Teachers' planning is good and what is to be learnt is carefully shared with pupils and included in their books. The subject is also supported well through other activities, such as the newspaper club. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to give clear explanations and teach key skills effectively. Teaching assistants, when available, are used well to assist lower-attaining pupils' learning. In satisfactory lessons, such as in Year 4, not enough thought is given to modifying the task or challenging higher-attaining pupils within a set to produce more or better work. Marking is complete but, although teachers make regular comments, pupils rarely respond to them or correct errors noted.



63. The leadership and management of English are very good. Assessment procedures are extensive and the results of assessments and national tests are analysed very carefully to identify areas of learning that need further development. The co-ordinator reports regularly to governors and she has produced detailed action planning for raising standards in the subject further. Effective support is given to colleagues. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, with improving standards, continuing very good leadership and better teaching.

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

64. There are very good cross-curricular links with other subjects in order to develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to write in different styles, at length and for different purposes across the curriculum and this contributes significantly to the good progress and achievement of pupils. In history, Year 5 pupils wrote descriptions of Henry VIII or his wives from paintings, reflecting on how the artist may have made the pictures flattering. In geography, Year 6 pupils have written at length about the importance of the rainforests. In science, pupils write about scientific investigations in an appropriate style and format. Opportunities to develop speaking skills, however, are not developed sufficiently; for instance, extended speech was rarely encouraged in physical education by asking pupils to comment on the strengths or areas to improve in a demonstration.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attainment of pupils is above average and achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment procedures and their use are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now very good.
- Opportunities for pupils to work independently are limited.
- There are insufficient links between numeracy and other curricular areas.

### **Commentary**

65. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 were in line with the national average. Since that time, there has been an improving trend. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are now above those expected nationally and compare well with those for 2004 when attainment was broadly in line with national levels. This current improvement is due to the effect over time of a number of strategies the school has put in place, which have enhanced provision. The majority of pupils enter school with standards that are below average. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards have risen to above average levels, which represent good achievement. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, irrespective of gender or ethnicity, including pupils with special educational needs.

66. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good, with some very good teaching seen in Year 2. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The National Numeracy Strategy, adapted to suit the needs of the school, is used well and teachers' knowledge of the mathematics curriculum is good. Planning is good because each year group plans together to ensure all pupils receive equality of provision. However, opportunities for pupils to undertake independent work are limited. Improved assessment procedures have played an important part in raising standards because they have enabled teachers to plan work more closely matched to pupils' abilities and, as a consequence, all pupils make good progress.
67. The ability setting arrangements introduced are also having a positive impact on standards. This is because teachers can plan to meet the particular needs of pupils of all abilities within the set groups and challenge them appropriately. In Year 6, higher-attaining pupils tackle algebraic equations well and make use of a formula to calculate the area of a triangle. In a lower-attaining class, pupils with special educational needs achieved well because they work in small groups and receive very good support from both teaching assistants and teachers who are sensitive to their needs. As an example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, while the class concentrated on the addition of money up to 20 pence, pupils in the lower-attaining group were well supported by the teaching assistant to undertake more practical activities, enabled the pupils in the group to quickly add numbers to 10.
68. All teachers promote mathematical vocabulary well and this helps to reinforce and extend pupils' mathematical language and understanding of the terms used. Very good use was made of the interactive whiteboards and appropriate software, which helped to make the lesson more interesting for pupils. In lessons, individual pupils gain confidence and succeed because the teachers' open-ended questioning is tailored to suit their needs. In the best lessons, teachers are lively and enthusiastic and make learning fun. This was evident in a Year 2 class where a variety of paired socks and packets of pens were used as a resource to aid pupils' understanding of counting in twos and tens. The lesson continued a good pace and, as a result, pupils remained focused, interested, achieved very well, and make very good progress. In all lessons, behaviour is very good and pupils listen carefully without interruption to the opinions of their fellow classmates, respecting their ideas. In all lessons, good relationships are apparent as pupils share resources sensibly and help each other.
69. Since the last inspection assessment procedures in mathematics have improved and these are now very good. Pupils' National Curriculum test data, at both Years 2 and 6, are analysed to identify where there are gaps in pupils' learning. The introduction of interim tests for Years 3 to 5 and other regular checking of pupils' progress have greatly increased the information available for teachers in order to make teaching and learning more effective. Pupils in Year 6 who would benefit from further support attend Booster Breakfast classes that enable them to achieve the nationally-expected levels by the end of the year. Pupils also set their own targets, which is effective in helping them to improve. Presentation of their work is always good because teachers have high expectations of them. Marking has improved with the introduction of a "traffic lights" system that identifies the extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding, on an ongoing basis.

70. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good and the co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that all the issues from the last inspection have been addressed and even further improvements made. Resources are very good. They have been updated and improved and used well to enhance learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. There are examples of the use of mathematics in science where pupils measure length to indicate how far their cars travel down a ramp and the use of a Newton meter to measure force exerted by a brick, in and out of water. In an ongoing study Year 4 use information and block graphs in science to record the length of pupils' bones over time, and in history, use is made of a timeline. However, the scrutiny of work provided and evidence from lesson observations and displays indicate that insufficient use is made of numeracy skills across the curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good** throughout the school. Many improvements have been made since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Investigative work is now introduced consistently across the school but there are limited opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations and experiments and work independently without close supervision.
- Teaching is now at least good, often very good, and at times, inspirational.
- Good assessment systems are now in place and the results used to plan the next steps in learning.
- Pupils much enjoy science, work very well collaboratively and handle equipment with great care.
- Good links with mathematics, literacy and ICT and good use of the school grounds as an environmental resource.
- Pupils' poor speaking skills prohibit full participation in question-and-answer sessions.
- The co-ordinator's monitoring of teaching in colleagues' classrooms is in abeyance.

### **Commentary**

72. Standards achieved in national tests have been variable from year to year. For various reasons beyond the control of the school, these were disappointing in 2003. There was a great improvement in 2004 and standards at the end of Year 6 were above the national average and high in comparison with similar schools. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 showed results in line both with the national average and in comparison with similar schools.

73. At present, standards in Year 2 are at least in line with national expectations. Given the overall good, and sometimes excellent, teaching in this year group, it may well be that by the time teacher assessment takes place in 2005, pupils will reach standards beyond these expectations. In Year 6, due to very good teaching, the great majority of pupils are reaching standards in line with those expected nationally and a significant number are attaining standards beyond this. This also augers well for the 2005 results

which should be at least above national expectations, if not higher, and better than those seen at the time of the last inspection.

74. Children start school with a below average scientific understanding. Due to the good opportunities they are offered, all pupils make good progress. They build on new facts and acquire a high interest in the subject as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support both by their teachers and by teaching assistants and this allows all children to achieve well in relation to their different abilities. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
75. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now at least good throughout the school. It is particularly good in Year 2 and Year 6 where strong classroom management and a flair for gaining pupils' interest and enthusiasm in investigative work are proving very successful in stimulating learning. In one excellent Year 2 lesson on the use of ramps, the teacher provided a dramatic and humorous introduction which nevertheless included appropriate subject-specific words and warnings about pupils making their tests fair. An excellent range of equipment and materials was readily available and the pupils carried out group experiments to find out the best material for slowing down the descent of toy cars. Such sensible children and such enjoyment! This was experimental science at its best. A challenging, stimulating lesson led to high productivity on the part of all pupils. In both very good Year 6 lessons in which pupils were learning about the "upthrust" exerted by water on an immersed brick and other objects, similar enthusiasm and care of equipment was displayed. Pupils' numeracy skills are used in many lessons, whether it is in reading off forcemeters in Newtons in Year 6, measuring and recording bone growth in Year 4 or using straws in Year 2 to measure distance. Results are carefully displayed in graph and table forms but opportunities are missed to do so using computer graphics. There are good links with personal, social and health education through aspects of sex education and healthy eating and living. As at the last inspection, teachers use the school grounds well to enrich the environmental aspect of the subject.
76. Teachers explain their objectives at the beginning of each lesson and this gives pupils a clear understanding of what they are about to learn. Interactive white boards are used well to focus pupils' attention on important points and to give appropriate support. The quality of marking is consistent and includes comments on how work could be extended or improved. All teachers have the same high expectations about the careful presentation of work, including accurate illustrative drawings and diagrams, and good writing skills are developed in this way. Pupils listen very carefully to what their teachers and other children have to say, but many are reluctant to take part in question-and-answer sessions. In one Year 4 class, however hard the teacher tried to involve some pupils, they were reluctant to make any verbal response. Both in past work and in lessons observed during the inspection, it is obvious that teachers are now more confident in setting up practical experiments and that there is improvement in this area of the science curriculum. Pupils work very well on these teacher-led investigations; however, there are still too few opportunities for them to design their own experiments and to carry these out. Pupils are very well behaved, collaborate productively in groups and handle equipment carefully, but during the inspection they never worked independently. In one very good Year 5 lesson on muffling sound, there were so many buzzers going off at the same time that it was sometimes difficult to

gauge the efficacy of different soundproofing materials. It was not suggested that pupils could take their materials and equipment and work elsewhere, perhaps into the corridor outside the classroom.

77. Since the last inspection, there has been a great improvement in the assessment process. Attainment data is now used well to analyse trends and where the subject has particular weaknesses which need to be addressed. Pupils' individual progress is gauged through an assessment of learning at the end of each topic. Before the national tests, those needing extra help are identified and given extra tuition by the co-ordinator. Whilst the co-ordinator looks at teachers' planning and children's work, his monitoring role in colleagues' classrooms is in abeyance at the moment, due to limited staffing to cover release time.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- Since the last inspection, many improvements have been undertaken to good effect.
- Pupils are confident users and enjoy the subject.
- Teachers' expertise is very good.
- Information and communication technology is used well across other curriculum areas.

### **Commentary**

78. Standards throughout the school are above the nationally expected levels for their age. All pupils achieve well, irrespective of gender or ethnicity, including those with special educational needs and all make good progress. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Many improvements to the provision for the subject have been undertaken and these have enabled pupils to reach above average standards, even though the national expectations in the subject have been raised.
79. Teaching and learning are good because all teachers have a high level of expertise and very good knowledge of all the programs they are using. Teachers demonstrate the next steps in learning to enable pupils to succeed at the tasks set. They make good use of open-ended questioning, not only to ascertain pupils' knowledge but also to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers are very positive and make good use of praise; consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons and work very well together. All pupils help each other to succeed and those with special educational needs are well supported by their peers and the teacher, which enables them to achieve well. Pupils come into school with appropriately developed skills, having received good experiences of the subject in the Reception classes.
80. By Year 2, pupils have developed their word-processing skills and type in sentences, change fonts and make simple changes to their text. They use control technology to draw simple shapes. Their musical knowledge is extended as they compile tunes to accompany a story, making a repeating pattern of musical notes and changing the

length of the note and the instrument, as they choose. By Year 6 pupils have experienced a wide range of software packages. They are able to compile their own "Fireworks" presentation incorporating text, graphics, animation and sound, together with information researched on the Internet.

81. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable expenditure on improving resources and these have had a good effect on the quality of provision, including teaching and learning. Computers in the suite have been replaced and each classroom now has two computers, all of which are connected to broadband. Other equipment purchased includes scanners, digital cameras and a floor robot set up in the science/technology room. There are now interactive whiteboards in the majority of the classrooms, which are used well by teachers to support learning. More appropriate software has also been purchased including a system in the library to keep better records of books borrowed and a similar system to monitor the cost - effectiveness of all the learning resources. All classes have video and DVD equipment in their rooms. All teachers are confident users and have been trained well. They use their own laptops to plan and produce reports. The technician is now employed for three days a week instead of two and is effective in ensuring that all resources are efficient.
82. Although the co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject since the beginning of the term, she is already showing good leadership. Areas for further improvement have been identified and the Internet Users' policy has been rewritten. A "Digital Excellence Award" has been organised to raise pupils' attainment further, as it will become part of the learning process for each pupil.

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

83. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good and is evident in the attractive displays around the school and its use during lessons. The Internet is used well to handle and communicate information for pupils' presentations and in other subjects such as history. Pupils are familiar with, and confidently use, programs and CD-ROMs to support learning in literacy, mathematics, science, history, music and art and design.

## **HUMANITIES**

Religious education and history were inspected in full. Geography was sampled because it was not a major focus during the inspection and no lessons were seen. It is therefore not possible to make detailed judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that their attainment is similar to that expected, but much of the work for all pupils is similar, and not enough thought is given to how to extend the challenge for more able pupils. Pupils' work and displays suggest that there is a better focus on developing skills than at the time of the last inspection. In Year 2, pupils' map work skills develop well, but the co-ordinator has identified the need to extend map work in the juniors. Year 6 pupils have developed a secure understanding of the importance of rainforests and why they should be conserved. Literacy and research skills, including the use of ICT, are developed well, but pupils' work does not include a great deal of numeracy.

## **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvements have been made to planning.
- Good teaching stimulates pupils' interest and learning.
- Very good behaviour and interest of the pupils.
- Literacy and ICT skills are employed well in recording work, but not used enough in support of independent research.
- Assessment and monitoring systems are underdeveloped.
- The study of famous people includes few from other than western cultures.

## Commentary

84. As at the last inspection, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectation. Improvements have been made to planning and, in all year groups, a scheme of work based on national guidelines ensures good coverage and progression in pupils' learning. From a below average knowledge and understanding of "times past" when they arrive at school, all are achieving well. Through careful planning, pupils are introduced to various times, situations and famous people in history, for example the bravery of Grace Darling and the life of Henry VIII, and cover these to some depth. There are very good links with other subjects, including art and design, geography and literacy. Through their letter-writing, in the role of people of that time, pupils are able to express empathy with imaginary situations such as being present on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Year 6 diaries, purporting to be written by Victorian country boys, show an understanding of the hard grind of work that children of that age experienced.
85. The school has recognised the need to extend pupils' interest in the history of their own area and in this way forge even greater links with the local community. Pupils study ancient civilisations, such as the Romans and the Egyptians, but the deeds and lives of more recent famous people from other than western cultures are insufficiently addressed. To older pupils in particular, this presents an unbalanced picture of the ethnicity of influential historical figures within more modern times.
86. Improvements since the last inspection are such that, from previously being only satisfactory, teaching and learning are good throughout the school and there is now a greater stock of artefacts. Teachers make lessons relevant and exciting by introducing items from a wide range of resources. For example, in one Year 6 lesson on Victorian school life, pupils found great difficulty in writing with dip pens and learnt from this experience. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to focus pupils' interest, information technology to download relevant pictures and information and videos to bring incidents and historical periods to life. In one good Year 2 lesson, a recording of a storm set the scene for work on Grace Darling. Teachers use role-play to enthuse their pupils, for example the enactment of a Roman event in Year 4, and this involvement in dramatic situations increases their confidence and ability to make verbal contributions. Visits to such places as the Roman villa at Lullingstone, Upnor Castle and Maidstone Museum are closely related to topic work and much enhance provision in this area of the curriculum.
87. Very good teaching assistant support allows pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in history lessons and achieve as well as other children. However,

written tasks are not always sufficiently matched to their different needs and this means that sometimes the work of less able pupils is meagre and unfinished. Teachers' planning does not always ensure that written tasks are sufficiently matched to the special needs of these pupils. This means that sometimes the work of less able pupils is sparse and unfinished and does not reflect their growing knowledge and understanding of historical people and events. Much of the work in lessons is teacher-led and the pupils' independent use of the books and computers for research purposes is unsatisfactory. Given the very good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, it is considered that many pupils would rise sensibly and conscientiously to such opportunities and in this way raise their standards of attainment even higher.

88. Teachers mark written work carefully and this, at its best, leads pupils on to greater understanding and thought. Systems for assessment of individual pupils' progress and development have only recently been introduced. This meant that the lack of formal assessment resulted in the needs of less able pupils being unfulfilled and more able pupils being insufficiently challenged. As at the last inspection, the monitoring of history teaching is still unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator looks at planning, gives teachers advice and examines pupils' books but, due to temporary staff shortages has not had release time to monitor her colleagues teaching in their classroom. She has many good ideas for stimulating classroom practice and, from such monitoring, would be able to give help and support where it was needed in delivering this aspect of the curriculum in an even more exciting way.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and by Year 6, their attainment is in line with that expected.
- Teaching of religious education is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Although pupils visit the nearby church, there are limited visits to other places of worship and few visitors representing the major world faiths visit the school.

### **Commentary**

89. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Their work displays knowledge of religious education similar to what might be expected, as set out in the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements, including improved subject knowledge of the teachers. Religious education has a higher focus in the school now and all classrooms have displays related to the current work, with a good use of artefacts.
90. Teaching of the subject is good and is effectively contributing to pupils' good achievement. There are good links with English, as teachers regularly use drama, discussion and interesting ways of recording facts, which engage the pupils and result in them enjoying the subject. This helps pupils with special educational needs to access the subject well. They receive very good support from teaching assistants when



they need to record or discuss their work. In a very successful Year 2 lesson about the events leading up to the Christmas story, pupils were effectively led, through discussion and drama, to think about and act out the feelings that Mary and Joseph might have had. Pupils depicted *exhausted* travellers and suggested that Joseph would have been *astounded* at the appearance of Angel Gabriel. Effective teaching is contributing towards pupils acquiring a greater vocabulary and understanding. Year 6 pupils, through discussion, displayed their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject. They have acquired a satisfactory understanding of Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. For example, they discussed the different holy books, such as the Torah and the Qu'ran and the special arrangements for looking after them. They demonstrated an understanding of the Bible stories and clearly explained the meaning behind stories such as The Good Samaritan. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, including their understanding of beliefs and values in their own and others' cultures. During a discussion with Year 6 pupils, they clearly explained that rules were necessary for any community so *'people can live together, otherwise there would be chaos'*. Through assemblies, pupils learn about Bible stories such as David and Goliath and have opportunities to reflect on such aspects as having friends.

91. Leadership and management are both good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and has been influential in raising the profile of religious education within the school and bringing about good improvements. Whilst there is a suitable emphasis given to Christianity, the curriculum covers other world religions appropriately. Planning shows that requirements of the recommended guidance from the locally-agreed syllabus are met. Statutory requirements for corporate worship are now met. Systems for assessment have recently been introduced throughout the school. It is too early to assess the impact on the system but it appears manageable for teachers to use. The curriculum co-ordinator has established effective links with the local church and vicar. Visits to the church significantly contribute towards pupils' understanding of the customs, festivals and symbolism of Christianity. This was clear from the enthusiasm and knowledge of Year 6 pupils, who had recently visited the church. In addition, the vicar from the local church visits the school to lead assembly at such times as harvest, which contributes towards effective links with the community. However, there have not been visits recently to other places of worship and few visitors come into school to talk about their faiths these are missed opportunities.

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

Art and design, music and physical education were inspected in depth. However, **design and technology** was sampled and was not a major focus during this inspection. No teaching was observed and there was not enough evidence across the school to judge achievement or provision. Planning follows national guidelines and meets curriculum requirements.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

Provision in art and design is **good**. There is a need to develop progression in art and design skills Pupils' growing knowledge and understanding of well-known artists and their

work is good. Good artwork is produced during special projects such as an Art Week and a project sponsored by the National Gallery.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A recently-provided specialist art room and a good range of resources, including materials, pictures and books.
- Evidence of good artwork produced for special projects and for Art Week.
- More consistent use of Art Ideas books than at the last inspection.
- Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of artists, albeit mainly from a western culture.
- Good use of art to illustrate other work in other subjects and to make the school an attractive environment.
- Art skills do not show sufficient progression.

### **Commentary**

92. As at the last inspection, standards in art and design are at least in line with national expectation. There is evidence from artwork produced during an Art Week that pupils can produce pieces of a higher quality when given specialist guidance. This shows that pupils have even better latent capabilities which are not being fully developed in classroom situations. Throughout the school, pupils make sound progress in acquiring a range of art skills and good gains in a knowledge and understanding of the work of other artists. As this is a practical subject, pupils with special educational needs also make similar gains. All pupils achieve well from below average beginnings in which many find it difficult to use even simple equipment. Evidence from work in lessons and displays throughout the school show that pupils are given good opportunities to mix colours, use a range of different media such as paint, pastels, felt pens and pencils and employ their computer skills well in making pictures. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to explore three-dimensional art, although the imaginative papier-mâché chairs on display in the art room are good examples of this aspect and the important design element of the subject. On occasion, clay which does not need firing is introduced and the pupils' work then painted and varnished. There is no progression to the use of clay which requires firing, and pupils do not experience the joy of using glazing techniques, as the school does not have a kiln. Both in displays and in art books, there is little evidence of the development of close observational work.

93. A strength of the curriculum is pupils' growing appreciation of famous artists and their work. This has been helped by the school's involvement in the National Gallery's "Take One Picture" project for 2004/2005. Led by the new enthusiastic art co-ordinator, classes across the school have produced a great variety of work based on the "Beach Scene" by Degas. An effective team approach has developed through this experience. Photographs of the results of this project have been submitted to the Gallery and it is hoped that this work will be chosen for future exhibition purposes. Around the school, many pictures by different artists are displayed and pupils' opinions about these sought. Year 1 pupils are able to show a growing knowledge about the life and work of Van Gogh and in Year 6, pupils satisfactorily try out the techniques favoured by this artist as well as by Seurat and Monet. Apart from the study of craftspeople in ancient civilisations, the use of work from other than western cultures is underdeveloped.

94. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in art and design is satisfactory, but there are variations in this across the school. The subject is well supported by lunch-time and after-school clubs. Since the last inspection, the use of Art Ideas books has improved and this is now consistent. These books are now appropriately employed to refine ideas such as the different ways that human bodies move. Teachers make good use of classroom support to encourage less confident pupils to take full part in lessons. Good adaptations are made to allow full access to all. For example, in one lesson using clay, a different, softer material was provided to meet the needs of an individual pupil while still allowing the objectives of the lesson to be fulfilled. Teachers are revelling in the possibilities of the new art room and the good range of art resources available. They are providing many opportunities for pupils to enjoyably experiment with different materials and ideas. However, the progressive development of art skills, such as printing and close observation, is only satisfactory and this limits the attainment of higher standards. Artwork is used well and often in support of other subject areas, for example history and literacy, and its careful display throughout the school plays a large part in creating a very attractive learning environment.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils enjoy musical activities.
- The number of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Parents and visitors make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Opportunities to listen to music during assembly have improved since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

95. Standards of music are above those expected nationally and pupils' achievement in lessons is good. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills through a range of musical activities offered to them by the school. Pupils play a variety of tuned and untuned instruments and they learn well. In just over two months, Year 4 pupils have learned how to play the ocarina. They quickly learn a new musical piece which, after practice, they play accurately, tunefully and in harmony. By Year 6, pupils are able to create their own pentatonic composition in small groups and perform well to an audience. They listen carefully to selected pieces of music and can identify a wide range of tuned instruments as well as explain their own ideas and feelings about each piece. Opportunities to listen to music during assembly have improved and each day an appropriate piece is chosen and identified. Pupils' singing also develops well and by Year 6, pupils can sing well in three and four rounds, tunefully and in unison, keeping to time and breathing correctly.
96. Teaching is at least good and often very good. Lessons are well prepared and planned and build on the musical knowledge, understanding and skills pupils gain each year during their school life. Pupils are mostly well behaved, listen carefully and concentrate well. All pupils enjoy the subject. They make good progress in lessons and they achieve well.

97. The curriculum co-ordinator, who is an accomplished musician, undertakes the class teaching throughout the school. She also plays a number of instruments well which she uses to demonstrate to pupils or to accompany them when required. The co-ordinator shows very good leadership. All the issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed and the school has raised the quality of musical provision available for the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
98. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and experiences and since the last inspection, these have been expanded. The clubs are very well attended and make a very good contribution to the standards of music in the school. There are three lunchtime recorder groups, ocarina and guitar clubs and a thriving band as well as a large successful established choir. Nearly 30 pupils receive instrumental tuition after school and this number is about to be expanded. At Christmas, pupils in Years 5 and 6 perform a musical play and in the summer there is a Summer Arts Concert combining music, drama and poetry. Involvement in the community is strong as pupils participate in a service at the local church. Pupils also sing at an old people's home and at a children's centre (with disabilities) Christmas concert. They also participate in the Maidstone Schools Recorder Festival and the choir is now invited annually to sing in Rochester Cathedral.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 2, dance skills are above the standard expected.
- All pupils learn to swim and standards are high.
- Attitudes to physical education are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good.

### **Commentary**

99. Teaching is good and, on occasions, very good, because it is clearly planned, challenges pupils very well and usually ensures that pupils remain active during lessons. In addition, teachers show good expertise and challenge pupils well. As a result, pupils achieve well and reach above the expected standard by Year 2 and in the juniors. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher developed pupils' dance skills very effectively. Using Hawaiian music, she established a suitable atmosphere and used questions very effectively to encourage pupils to suggest what activities they might do on a beach. Clear instructions ensured pupils knew they had to exaggerate their actions within the dance sequences. All pupils were fully involved and had great fun, working together and sharing ideas exceptionally well. The only weakness was that after pupils had warmed up, time was taken discussing what could be included in the dance in which pupils cooled down. In a very good Year 5 PE lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to make it more difficult to succeed by suggesting that they should be further apart when striking a ball to a partner with a hockey stick. Her very good knowledge also ensured that pupils understood why they should step into the shot to add pace to the ball. Pupils throughout the school attain well in swimming, as is evident in the number and range of swimming certificates presented last year. In

virtually all PE lessons observed, pupils' attainment was above that expected for their age, although about a third of pupils in a Year 4 lesson showed limited tactical awareness in moving and creating space to receive a thrown pass. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in physical education lessons are very good; they are enthusiastic, behave very well and enjoy the physical challenges involved. Although teachers used pupils to demonstrate what they had achieved, rarely were pupils encouraged to comment on and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of other pupils' skills. As a result, pupils did not have the opportunity to extend their speaking skills sufficiently. On occasions, physical education sessions are only half an hour and the Year 6 dance observed was not very effective, despite the teacher's efforts, because of the short time. In all lessons observed, pupils wore uncovered earrings, including small hoops; these represent a potential health and safety risk. Standards that are mostly above those expected and usually good or better teaching represent a good improvement since the last inspection.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- PSHE is integral to much of the school's teaching.
- The co-ordinator has led the development of PSHE in the school very well, which has resulted in good progress.
- The school council makes a positive contribution to the life of the school.

### **Commentary**

100. At the time of the last inspection, there was no formally planned PSHE programme. The co-ordinator, who leads the subject very well, has developed a detailed programme of work and a scheme to assess pupils' success in each topic covered. Part of the programme includes specific taught lessons. The one lesson seen featured good teaching, which explored bullying and being kind. This built well from an assembly that featured the story of David and Goliath. Much of the PSHE programme, however, is developed from other subjects of the curriculum. This is done well, and the co-ordinator monitors this by requiring teachers to identify planned opportunities by the use of coloured stickers on their lesson planning. The success of the approach is evident in the many displays around the school that feature PSHE. The school's programme includes sex education and the dangers of drug abuse. The school has high expectations of its pupils' behaviour and respect for others in the community. Classroom and other observations show that the pupils thoroughly understand these expectations. The school council, which has representatives from Years 1 to 6, discusses matters of importance to all pupils in the school. Class representatives consult their peers, and give feedback on the outcomes of their meetings and what action is being taken. An awareness of citizenship is developed as members of each class elect their own representatives. Voting takes place on other issues, such as the range of drinks to be available on Sports Day.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

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

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

