

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MADGINFORD PARK INFANT SCHOOL**

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118488

Headteacher: Mrs L Cann

Lead inspector: Mr D Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 March 2004

Inspection number: 256815

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	267
School address:	Merton Road Bearsted Maidstone Kent
Postcode:	ME 15 8LJ
Telephone number:	01622 738351
Fax number:	01622 739117
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend D Bond
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Madginford Park Infant School is above average size, compared with other primary schools across the country, and has 267 pupils on roll. Most pupils live within the school's catchment area. Nearly all pupils are of White United Kingdom heritage, three are from mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage and two each from other white backgrounds and mixed white and Asian backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national average. Low eligibility for free school meals suggests that the school is in a favourable socio-economic context. Twenty-three per cent have special educational needs, which is above average. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties and social and emotional difficulties. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is lower than in most schools. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school is average. Attainment on entry to the school varies. For the past two years, it has been above average. For the two years prior to these, it was average. The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2905	David Shepherd	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education
19436	Michael O'Malley	Lay inspector	
25466	Gary Perkins	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Art and design Physical education
32325	Martyn Webb	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Geography History
33165	Sharon Harris	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Madginford Park Infant School provides a sound education** for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils start school with standards that vary year by year. They are above average this year, but average for the pupils in Year 2 this year and last year. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are above expected levels and those in mathematics and science are at the expected levels. Pupils achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Because of very good teaching, children achieve very well in the reception classes and reach standards that are well above the levels expected in a number of areas
- When compared with other schools, standards in the 2003 national tests were above average in English and mathematics. Standards in science were below average
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and their behaviour is very good; the school provides very well for pupils' pastoral care and personal development
- Pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, are sometimes not provided with activities that encourage them to use their initiative and solve problems which are correctly matched to their levels of ability
- Information from assessments is not used well enough to encourage pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, to reach higher standards
- The school provides very well for pupils' care and welfare and seeks their views very well
- Subject co-ordinators are not given enough opportunity to monitor teaching in their subjects and information from monitoring is not used well enough to raise standards

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, overall. Standards achieved and provision in the Foundation Stage have improved significantly. Standards in ICT, music and art and design are higher than they were, but those in science and religious education are lower than they were. Standards in English, mathematics and history are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Teaching and learning have remained at similar levels. Leadership and management have improved in some respects, but do not focus enough on ways of raising standards. The school has corrected the weaknesses in teaching identified at the last inspection. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, but some weaknesses remain in using assessment to improve standards and in helping pupils to improve through marking.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 2 results

Pupils who took the national tests in 2003 reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with other schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in writing, but below average in reading and mathematics. Standards in science were below average, overall, but higher-attaining pupils achieved well above average. The achievement of this group of pupils was unsatisfactory in reading and science because they did not reach high enough standards.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	B	B	D
writing	A	C	B	C
mathematics	C	A	B	D

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Inspection evidence indicates that the achievement of pupils this year in Year 2 in English and mathematics, in relation to where they started from, is satisfactory, overall. Pupils achieve at higher levels in writing, but not high enough in solving problems and investigative work in mathematics and science. They achieve well in art and design, history and music, where standards are above expected levels. Standards in ICT and religious education are at expected levels and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Sometimes, higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as much as they could because the work set for them is not challenging enough. The achievement of children in the reception classes is very good and pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected for children of this age in a number of areas.

**Pupils' personal development is very good. Their moral and social development are very good. Their spiritual and cultural development are good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory** with good features. They are very good in the reception classes and satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this helps them teach well so that pupils understand. Pupils are encouraged well and given satisfactory support and guidance in their work and they behave well. Sometimes, work is not matched closely enough to pupils' capabilities and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils, can achieve. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, compared with the National Curriculum levels are good, but not enough use is made of this information to raise standards. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils are provided with very good levels of care. Links with parents are very good and those with other schools is good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The leadership provided by the headteacher is satisfactory. She receives good support in this from the deputy headteacher and senior staff. Subject leadership is satisfactory, overall. Subject co-ordinators monitor provision in their subjects well but their plans for improvement do not focus enough on raising standards. Management is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and governance is satisfactory.

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

Parents and pupils are very supportive of the school and relationships with them are very good. Parents are very satisfied with the school and did not raise any significant areas for criticism before the inspection. Pupils feel their views are taken into account well by the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- ensure that pupils are provided with activities that give them more opportunities to use their initiative and are matched correctly to their capabilities, particularly higher-attaining pupils
- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by using assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils, including for higher-attaining pupils, to encourage them to reach higher standards
- extend the role of subject co-ordinators to observe teaching in their subjects and use the information from monitoring to raise standards

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is very good, and in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory. However, when compared with similar schools, the achievement of pupils who took the national tests in 2003 was unsatisfactory, overall. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are above expected levels.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development and reach levels that are well above average; they achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development and reach standards that are above average
- Pupils reach standards in English that are above expected levels by the end of Year 2
- The achievement in mathematics and science of pupils in Year 2, in the 2003 national tests, was unsatisfactory, overall
- Standards in art and design, history and music are above expected levels and pupils achieve well in these subjects

#### **Commentary**

##### **Foundation Stage**

1. The attainment of pupils starting school varies year by year. For the past two years, it has been above average. For pupils who are currently in Year 2, and those who took the national tests in 2003, their attainment when starting school was average. Inspection evidence indicates that through very skilful teaching, children achieve very well and enter Year 1 with standards that are well above those children are expected to reach by this age in their personal development, literacy, mathematical development and creative development. In other areas of learning, their attainment is above average.

##### **Key Stage 1**

2. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above average when compared with other schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. Overall, the achievement of this group of pupils in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory in writing and mathematics, but unsatisfactory in reading. During the past five years, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen at a similar rate to those nationally. Standards in science were below average, overall, but those for higher-attaining pupils were well above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.4 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.9 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*



- Standards seen during the inspection were better than these results indicate. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in reading and writing that are above the levels expected for pupils of this age. Standards in mathematics and science are at expected levels. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is satisfactory. This is because of the overall satisfactory teaching they receive in Years 1 and 2. Standards are highest in writing, where the school has been focusing successfully on raising achievement. They are lowest in problem solving in mathematics and investigative work in science, where pupils are not being given enough opportunity to use their initiative and work problems out for themselves. This slows down the achievement of higher-attaining pupils, in particular. Pupils achieve well in art and design, history and music and reach above the levels expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievement in ICT and religious education is satisfactory and attainment is at expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, overall. However, when additional help from teaching assistants is available, they make good progress.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their moral and social development are also very good. Their spiritual and cultural development are good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show very high levels of interest in lessons and other school activities
- Pupils know what is expected and behave very well
- There are very good relationships and pupils respect one another
- Pupils' personal development is very good. They are self-assured and keen to take responsibility.

### **Commentary**

- Pupils like school. They want to learn and they work hard in lessons. They are keen to take part in activities, such as the gardening and recorder club. They behave very well. They know what is expected from them and teachers work consistently to maintain these high standards. Pupils' relationships with one another and with teachers are very good. There were no incidents of bullying or racism observed during the inspection. Rough play and instances of pupils falling out with each other are quickly and successfully tackled by staff.
- Pupils' moral development and social development are very good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to think through the consequences of their actions carefully. The school council and lessons in personal, social and health education make a very good contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils are keen to help with class routines and older pupils take on responsibility well as playground and lunch-time helpers. The school is very effective at promoting pupils' self-esteem and this enables pupils to feel confident in their work and to learn effectively. Playground markings are designed very well to encourage pupils to play co-operatively and many pupils do so successfully. However, insufficient opportunities were provided during the inspection for pupils to work together collaboratively and to develop their social skills further.
- Pupils' spiritual development and cultural development are good. Pupils are encouraged to talk about themselves and to think about their personal experiences as they reflect carefully about their inner feelings and thoughts. This is achieved through assemblies that include themes such as 'understanding our feelings' and stories from around the world. Assemblies include prayer and reflection, and help pupils to consider their own values and beliefs and those of others who think differently from themselves. They learn about the Christian and other faiths in religious education and these lessons help pupils to learn about the cultures, beliefs and practices of others. The school is very effective at promoting mutual respect and concern for others. Pupils learn more about their own and other cultures through special occasions like book week and art days. They also learn about musical instruments from other lands and have watched African drummers and Indian dancers performing for them in school. The

school draws effectively on the expertise of parents, who have shown pupils Chinese cooking and Hindu clothing.

7. Pupils in the reception classes make very good progress in their personal development. The high standards in this aspect, noted at the last inspection, have been maintained.
8. Attendance is well above the national average and punctuality is very good. However, this year, about one in four pupils is taking holidays during term-time. These holidays disrupt pupils' learning in class and slow down the progress they make. There were no exclusions at the school during the last year.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.4	School data :	0.0
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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. The school provides pupils with very good levels of care and looks after them very well. Links with parents are very good and with other schools are good. Links with the community are satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, with good features. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning in the reception classes are consistently very good
- Teachers have good expertise and they use this well to help pupils learn
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils during their work
- Pupils are keen to be involved in their learning and they work very well
- Assessment procedures are good but the information from them is not used well enough to help raise standards
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are too low, especially for higher-attaining pupils. This is a significant factor in standards not being higher than they are
- Pupils' work is marked conscientiously, but marking does not provide enough information to pupils about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further

### Commentary

9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. During the inspection over half the lessons seen were judged to be either good or very good. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in the reception classes. Teaching and learning are similar to those at the last inspection. The quality of assessment is satisfactory.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (%)	9 (28%)	9 (28%)	14 (44%)	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.

10. There are a number of strengths in the teaching that help pupils learn effectively. Teachers have good subject expertise. This enables them to ask questions of pupils that identify what they know already and to understand the next stage of their learning. Teachers encourage pupils sensitively and carefully in their work and this encourages pupils well in their learning. Relationships are good and enable pupils to feel emotionally and socially secure in their work. Resources are of a good quality and are used well to help pupils with what they are being taught. For example, the use of laptop computers in one lesson helped pupils create pictures in the style of the artist, Mondrian. In history artefacts from the past enabled pupils to become successful 'history detectives'. Teaching assistants provide very good support for teachers and pupils, especially when pupils are carrying out tasks by themselves. They understand what is expected of them and work conscientiously and sensitively with pupils. Homework is used well to reinforce learning in classrooms, especially in literacy and numeracy. For instance, there are good examples of the links between the teaching of letter sounds in class and finding out the patterns that letters make in words at home.
11. Teachers are successful in their insistence on high standards of behaviour during lessons and around the school. Pupils respond very positively to this and behave very well. They work diligently and show care and considerable concern for one another. There are few occasions where teaching is interrupted because teachers have to correct bad behaviour. Pupils work well, both as individuals and in small groups. They are very keen to be involved in their learning and apply themselves very well to their work.
12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, overall. It is good when these pupils receive help from teaching assistants and satisfactory on other occasions when this help is not available. In the best lessons, pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to discuss what they are learning, are given enough time to think about what they are doing, and are given good help with their written work. However, when extra help is not available for these pupils, they do not make as much progress because they do not receive the amount of adult help they need in order to achieve well. They sometimes find the tasks set for them too hard to carry out by themselves.
13. In spite of this largely positive picture, there are areas where teaching and learning could be improved. Procedures for assessment are good. Teachers assess and keep careful records of the standards pupils achieve in most subjects compared with the National Curriculum. However, as noted at the last inspection, information from these assessments is not used well enough to help improve the standards for all pupils. As a result, work is not always set at the correct level for pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils. Work for these pupils does not encourage them to think hard enough, solve problems or work independently. These pupils are often set the same work to complete as other pupils in the class and this is sometimes too easy for them. Overall, this means that teachers' expectations of the achievements of higher-attaining pupils are too low. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, higher-attaining pupils did not work on the harder work that had been planned for them because they had to complete an easy task first and this took up all the time available. A further indicator of teachers' expectations being too low is illustrated in the targets set for pupils. These are sometimes too easy for pupils and do not indicate enough aspiration by the teacher to ensure that pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

14. The school has introduced useful marking procedures to help pupils in their work. These include talking to pupils about their work and are working well in some classes. However, they are not being used consistently enough in all classes to indicate to pupils what is good about their work and what they need to do next to improve. Aspects of marking remain an issue from the previous inspection.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision in history, music and art and design is good and pupils achieve well in these subjects
- Teachers plan well in year groups so that all pupils of the same age are taught similar lessons
- The planning of topics does not identify clearly enough the elements of subjects being taught and because of this pupils do not make as much progress as they should
- Not enough time is spent teaching science
- Provision for boys is good and this helps them in their learning; provision for higher-attaining pupils should be improved
- The school provides a good range of visits and visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum
- The school provides a spacious and stimulating environment in which pupils learn and is well equipped with resources of good quality

## **Commentary**

15. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school teaches the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy systematically and follows national guidance well for most other subjects. The local agreed syllabus for religious education is followed satisfactorily. A sound programme of personal, social and health education is taught. This includes good opportunities for sex education and drugs education at suitable levels for the age of the pupils. All this helps to ensure that pupils make progress in subjects systematically and that they build on previous learning from year to year. Lessons are planned carefully by teachers in year groups to ensure that pupils of the same age in different classes receive a similar curriculum.
16. The school plans much of its work through half-termly topics, which combine elements of literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, history, geography and religious education. In this way, teachers make links between subjects. However, these links are not always sufficiently clear and are not planned precisely enough for them to be as effective as they should be. Pupils do not make as much progress in different subjects as they should because of this. Work in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, history and geography is sensibly arranged in blocks of time in order to allow greater opportunity for in-depth study. Provision in history, music and art and design is good. The overall balance of curriculum time does not leave enough time for science.
17. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Provision for boys is good and they achieve better than the girls compared with their peers in other schools. There has been an increase in physical activities through the introduction of specific activity programmes to help promote boys' learning. Many resources, such as books and computers, appeal to boys and they learn well as a result. These initiatives have contributed well to boys' achievement.
18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, overall. The school's procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are good. Carefully selected individual programmes of work are devised for these pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed

well to give these pupils extra help in many lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on these occasions. However, they make satisfactory when this extra help is not available for them. The current arrangements used by the school for the withdrawal of some pupils with special educational needs for additional lessons result in these pupils missing out on aspects of the curriculum and slows down the progress they make in the subjects they have missed. The school provides well for pupils with emotional, behavioural and more complex learning needs and works well with external agencies to provide guidance on the teaching of these pupils. Provision for higher-attaining pupils is not always carefully matched their abilities and these pupils do not always make the progress they should.

19. The school provides a good range of activities that enrich the curriculum. These include visits to Dover Castle and Tyland Barn, taking part in local music festivals and concerts, together with visits from artists and musicians who perform for the pupils. The school plans a good programme of special events, including book weeks, special assemblies and school productions. A small number of extra-curricular activities takes place at lunch-time, mainly for Year 2 pupils. These include recorders, environmental and playground clubs and the school council.
20. The accommodation is good. Classrooms are of a good size and well furnished and resourced. Resources are good, overall, and are well organised to support teaching across the curriculum. There has been particular improvement in the provision of resources for ICT through purchasing laptops that are suitably timetabled for different classes and used well. Attractive displays around the school provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils.
21. The outdoor environment is attractive, well resourced and well-maintained. Good use is made of outside areas for improving the curriculum. For example, mini-beasts from the wild garden are used as resources for investigative work in science. The school grounds have been substantially improved in recent years to provide pupils with good opportunities and choices of activities in which to play at breaktimes and lunch-times. This has a good effect on pupils' behaviour, as pupils play well on the apparatus provided and use the markings on the playground effectively for their games.

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

Procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The provision of support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory, overall. Pupils' involvement in the life and work of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes very good care of pupils and takes very good account of their views

#### **Commentary**

22. Teachers know their pupils and their families very well. They understand and meet pupils' personal and social needs very well so that they feel secure and confident to get on with their learning. Arrangements for health and safety are very good. Staff know pupils with medical conditions very well and first-aid procedures are good. The premises are checked systematically for hazards and improvements made where necessary. There are effective procedures for child protection. Pupils are very confident that there is someone they can turn to if they have problems. The school takes very good account of pupils' views and concerns through the school council, pupil surveys and lessons in personal, social and health education.
23. Pupils receive satisfactory guidance in their work. Good additional support is provided for groups of pupils through additional programmes in literacy and numeracy. These pupils are identified carefully by teachers as being in need of extra help to develop their physical co-ordination, concentration, social skills or language skills. Pupils with special educational needs

receive good guidance in the individual programmes of work that are worked out for them. All pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy that are discussed with them and their parents. However, some of the targets, especially for higher-attaining pupils, are not challenging enough for them and they reach them too easily. Pupils receive good guidance in their personal development. They are taught well how to behave and are corrected well if they misbehave.

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

The school has a very effective partnership with parents. There are satisfactory links with the community and good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The information provided for parents about the school and their children's progress is good
- The school works closely with parents and responds effectively to their concerns; parents give good support to the school
- Links with other schools are good; arrangements for pupils starting school are very good

### **Commentary**

24. The school has very effective links with parents, and they are pleased with its work. There are very good arrangements for introducing parents and their children to the school. Parents are kept very well informed about what is going on in school through regular newsletters. The prospectus and welcome pack for parents new to the school are informative and well-written. Parents are kept very well informed about what their children are learning and how they can help. This is achieved through newsletters, leaflets and meetings to discuss topics, such as reading and writing. Parents are encouraged to keep teachers well-informed about their children and the school is quick to involve them when there are problems. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well-informed about their children's progress and they are involved in discussing their children's targets for improvement. There are good arrangements for keeping parents informed on their children's progress through parents' meetings and the annual written report. The school consults regularly with parents and takes account of their views.
25. Parents are involved and give good support to the school's work. There are good arrangements for homework and parents are keen to support their children. Many parents attend events like concerts and special assemblies. A good number of parents help in school. An active Parents and Friends Association organises a wide range of social events and raises funds for the school.
26. Links with other schools are good. There are very good arrangements to help pupils settle into the school. Staff visit the main playgroups that children attend and children make at least three visits to school before starting. Parents are kept very well informed about, and are pleased with, arrangements for starting school. The school seeks parents' views about their children's development and continues to work closely with them to make sure their children are settling in well. There are good arrangements with the junior school to which pupils transfer. Subject co-ordinators from the school discuss literacy, mathematics and special educational needs with subject co-ordinators from the junior school. There is also a joint Parents-Teachers Association with the junior school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. The leadership provided by subject co-ordinators is satisfactory. The management of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and governance is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The learning environment promotes pupils' learning well
- The leadership and management provided by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator are very good
- The induction of staff new to the school is good
- The school does not focus enough on taking action taken to raise standards as a result of checking on its work

### Commentary

27. The headteacher has led the staff well in creating an attractive and stimulating learning environment in which pupils learn. Displays around the school reflect the work in which pupils are engaged and staff know their pupils well and take good care of them. Behaviour is managed successfully and pupils behave well. All this provides a secure foundation that promotes the learning of pupils well.
28. The leadership and management provided by the senior management team of the deputy headteacher, Foundation Stage co-ordinator and year group leaders are satisfactory, overall. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and of the deputy headteacher good. Members of the senior management team, in partnership with the headteacher, check on the work of the school systematically and they lead their respective teams of teachers satisfactorily. They carry out observations of teachers well under the National Programme of Performance Management.
29. The leadership and management provided by subject co-ordinators are satisfactory, overall. They assess teachers' plans to ensure that statutory requirements are met and, under the guidance of the headteacher and senior management team, monitor pupils' work satisfactorily. However, the action taken following the monitoring is unsatisfactory. With the exception of English, plans of action do not have a sharp enough focus on correcting weaknesses in standards. This is also reflected in the school improvement plan. This plan is detailed but does not have a sharp enough focus on raising standards.
30. The co-ordination of special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good expertise in the arrangements required for pupils with special educational needs, including the writing of learning targets, liaising with staff, working with parents and reviewing the quality of provision. The co-ordinator has developed a clear action plan for further improvements in provision.
31. Teachers who are new to the school are provided with good guidance to help them settle in quickly to their role. A senior member of staff is allocated to a new member of staff and this ensures that new teachers have a point of reference if they are unsure about the school's routines or the curriculum to teach. Training is provided in-school and by external trainers for newly qualified teachers and this helps them deal with day-to-day procedures and learn about what is happening in education nationally. This gives newly qualified teachers a good start to their career.
32. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They have a close working relationship with the headteacher. They ask pertinent questions of the headteacher before decisions are made and this gives the headteacher confidence that all aspects of an issue have been considered for the benefit of pupils. Governors play an active part in developing the school improvement plan and they check on how well it is being implemented. However, governors do not ask regularly enough the crucial question of whether the initiatives are raising standards sufficiently. Governors visit the school regularly and some observe teachers in classes. However, they do not ensure that the action taken following the identification of weaknesses within school is followed through rigorously enough.

33. The school has a good capacity to improve. The Foundation Stage gives children a very good start to their schooling. Children in the reception classes achieve very well. Some of the ways of working used in the reception classes are now being used in Years 1 and 2 and this is helping to raise standards in these classes. The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators have strengths in monitoring aspects of the school's work, but now staff need to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and focus more on how to raise standards effectively.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	648,471	Balance from previous year	31,251
Total expenditure	641,562	Balance carried forward to the next	38,160
Expenditure per pupil	2,376		

34. The school receives below average funding. Governors spend monies prudently and apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. They ensure that pupils learn in a comfortable and attractive environment. The school's financial systems check the school's spending accurately and the carry forward from year-to-year is similar to that recommended nationally. The school is well resourced overall and the Foundation Stage is very well resourced. Bearing in mind that the standards achieved are satisfactory and that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, the value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.



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

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

Provision in the reception classes is very good and children achieve very well.

Attainment on entry varies year by year. This year, it is above average. It was above average for pupils who are currently in Year 1, but average for pupils who are currently in Year 2. It was average for pupils who took the national tests in Year 2 in 2003. The achievement of children in the reception classes is very good because the teaching and learning are consistently very good. Staff assess children's achievements in all areas of learning very well and keep up-to-date records of their achievements. This helps them plan a curriculum for them that is very closely matched to their abilities. Nearly all children reach the goals that children of this age are expected to achieve and many exceed these goals in all areas of learning. However, children who were in Year 2 in 2003 made satisfactory progress when in the reception classes and reached the standards expected for children of this age. The curriculum is very securely based on national guidance for children of this age and is very well resourced. The accommodation for the reception classes is very good. Leadership and management are very good. Children in the reception classes are provided with a very good introduction to school.

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

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

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

- Classrooms are calm and orderly and pupils respond very well by taking responsibility for their own learning

#### **Commentary**

35. Relationships are very good. Pupils respond very well to this and behave very well. They enjoy school and the activities provided for them. They tidy up their apparatus and equipment at the end of lessons and act with maturity for their age. They try out new activities eagerly, whether this is mixing different colours of paints together to form new colours or using their voices to sing higher or lower notes. They pay attention to their teachers and teaching assistants and work well individually or as part of a group. They change for physical education lessons by themselves and very few need help with undoing buttons on their clothes. Many children start school with standards in this area that are above average. They achieve very well in all aspects of this area and begin Year 1 with standards that are well above average. Teaching and learning in this area are very good.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Children are taught the sounds letters make very well
- Children describe what they are doing very clearly and listen very attentively to their teachers

#### **Commentary**

36. Many children enter school with above average standards in speaking and listening. They achieve very well in these aspects and reach standards that are well above average by the

time they start Year 1. Standards in reading are developing very well. Many children know the sounds that letters make and this helps them to read new words. Higher-attaining children are beginning to read and write simple sentences under the expert guidance of their teachers. All children achieve very well and many reach standards that are well above average for children of this age. Teaching and learning of this aspect are very good.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with many good opportunities to practice their numbers

#### **Commentary**

37. Children practise counting in ones very effectively when the register is being called at the beginning of the morning and afternoon. They count and find out how many children are present and how many are staying for lunch. Puppets are used very effectively to encourage children to count correctly. Higher-attaining children learn how to take away the number of children who are absent from the total number in the class. Pupils recognise numbers and learn how to write them properly. Teachers use a good range of resources to help children's learning of number. For example, they use cubes, find numbers in sand and roll a large dice and place the correct number of spots on a large picture of a ladybird. Children also learn the names of common shapes, such as *circle*, *square*, *triangle* and *rectangle*. Pupils achieve very well in their understanding of number and, although starting school with above average attainment, reach the standards that are well above expected levels for children of this age by the time they start in Year 1.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement in using computers is above average
- Children are provided with excellent opportunities for casting shadows and completing electrical circuits

#### **Commentary**

38. Teachers provide children with excellent opportunities to learn about ICT and how things work. For example, children learn how to control a computer mouse skilfully and work through simple computer programs. Many pupils use the computer program 'Colour Magic' to draw a beanstalk and colour it in. They program a programmable robot to move forwards, sideways and backwards. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to use a torch to cast shadows of toys and know how to complete an electrical circuit with batteries to turn on a light. These achievements exceed the standards expected of pupils of this age and they reach these because of the good teaching that has enabled them to achieve well.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with a very good range of opportunities to develop their physical skills

## Commentary

39. Children have regular opportunities to play on tricycles, scooters and hobby-horses during lessons. They have regular lessons in the hall in physical education. They use a wide range of small apparatus and equipment, such as shape cutters, craft cutters, paint-brushes, thick and thin pens and pencils, scissors and construction blocks. These all help to develop children's physical skills well. Teaching and learning in this area are good because teachers show children how to use equipment and materials carefully before they allow them to use them. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and many reach standards that are above average for children of this age.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in music is outstanding
- Children are provided with very good opportunities to use paints and act out roles in their vets and pets shops

## Commentary

40. Children are taught music by a specialist teacher who teaches them how to sing higher and lower notes very well. Teaching and learning in music is very good and imaginative. The teacher uses a baby bear to climb stairs to bed as children practise singing higher notes and takes the baby down the stairs when children are practising lower notes. Children are introduced to different musical instruments, such as the xylophone, during lessons. Children are encouraged to mix paints to see what colours they make. The teaching of this is very good because the teacher shows children how to wash brushes in between mixing different colours. Each class has a pets' and vets' area to help them act out the roles of bringing pets for treatment at the vets'. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well in the aspects of this area inspected. Standards are well above average in the areas inspected.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are above expected levels and improving because of the school's emphasis on these aspects of English
- Teachers' expertise in English is good and this helps teachers in their teaching
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially of higher-attaining pupils, are capable of are sometimes too low
- The structure of lessons does not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills

## Commentary

41. By the end of Year 2, in 2003, standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening were above average when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in writing and below average in reading. Bearing in mind that the attainment on entry of this group of pupils was average, their achievement in writing was

satisfactory but that in reading was unsatisfactory. Overall, standards in reading and writing are broadly similar to those at the last inspection. The recent initiatives undertaken by the school to improve standards in reading and writing, especially for higher-attaining pupils, are beginning to be successful.

42. Inspection findings indicate that standards in speaking and listening are above expected levels. The achievement of pupils in speaking and listening is good. Pupils listen well and speak clearly. For example, they listen intently to each other as they tell stories they have made up, describing events and actions confidently. They are developing confidence in speaking to an audience of their classmates. Their skills in speaking and listening help pupils learn effectively because they tell their teachers which aspects of their work they understand and which they are unsure of. Teachers, in their turn, help pupils effectively because they know which aspects of their learning to repeat.
43. Standards in reading are above expected levels. Pupils read confidently with good understanding. They are beginning to develop fluency in their reading and express opinions about what they have read. They know the sounds that letters make and this helps them to read unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining pupils were observed finding words in dictionaries. Achievement in reading is satisfactory, overall. There are signs that the school's emphasis on improving standards in reading is starting to be successful, especially for lower- and average-attaining pupils. Overall, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory.
44. Standards in writing are above expected levels. Pupils organise their ideas for writing successfully. They write in different styles well. For instance, they write stories, reports and letters that are usually punctuated correctly with full stops, capital letters and question marks. Spelling is usually correct. Writing, especially that produced by higher-attaining pupils, often indicates a sensitive awareness of the reader. This indicates that these pupils are adapting their writing successfully depending on the audience that will read it. Achievement over time in writing is satisfactory, and, at times, good. The analysis of pupils' work during the inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 had made good achievement in their writing from the beginning of the year to the present time, especially in handwriting and sentence structure. This is as a result of the school's recent emphasis on improving standards in writing. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and, in some cases, good. This is similar to that recorded at the last inspection. Teachers have good subject expertise. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher's high level of subject expertise enabled her to ask questions that challenged pupils' thinking as they planned their own versions of a traditional tale. In the most effective lessons, work is well planned and this helps pupils to be fully involved in their learning and to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of English. Teaching assistants help pupils, especially those with special educational needs, effectively. Relationships are good and this provides pupils with the personal and emotional security that help to give them the confidence to learn well. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils, in their turn, are well-behaved.
46. Occasionally, activities are not matched correctly to the capabilities of pupils, especially for higher-attaining pupils. These pupils are not given enough opportunity to work independently and improve their skills. Teachers' aspirations for the achievement of higher-attaining pupils are frequently too low and this leads to a lack of challenge for these pupils within teaching. They are often capable of moving directly to the second task that has been prepared for them without first having to complete the same task as other pupils. This would help them to learn at a faster rate. More generally, the learning of all pupils is slowed down because teachers take up too much time at the beginning of lessons in whole-class teaching, and pupils are not given enough opportunity to consolidate their learning by carrying out tasks by themselves.

The school has developed a very useful marking scheme that includes talking to pupils about

their work but it is not carried out consistently on all occasions. This means that pupils sometimes do not know what is good about their work or what they need to do to improve.

47. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory. Throughout the school, these pupils receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. They are included fully in lessons and other activities. They achieve well when receiving additional help, but, at other times, their achievement is satisfactory.
48. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The subject was being co-ordinated on a temporary basis at the time of the inspection because the substantive co-ordinator was on maternity leave. The school records the progress made by pupils well. Data from national tests is analysed well and sound plans produced for correcting the weaknesses identified. These plans are beginning to be successful as standards in reading and writing are now improving, especially for average-attaining pupils.

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

49. There are good examples of language and literacy being used effectively in other subjects. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills in all subjects. Pupils are given good opportunities to consolidate their writing skills in history, geography, art and design and science. For example, they write to explain their feelings about their work in art and design. In history, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills when discussing historical characters. Literacy skills are taught effectively through numeracy lessons. For example, pupils are given appropriate mathematical vocabulary to learn and use when explaining their methods of calculation. However, not enough opportunities are taken for pupils to develop their thinking and writing skills in religious education.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in mathematics, particularly in problem-solving, are improving because this is a priority for the school
- High-attaining pupils are capable of reaching higher standards than they do at present
- Good help is available for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and they achieve well
- On occasions, marking does not let pupils know what they need to do to improve
- There is, currently, insufficient rigour in the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress

### **Commentary**

50. National test results, in 2003, showed that standards were above average when compared with other schools. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were below average. Bearing in mind that these pupils started school with average levels of attainment, their achievement over time has been satisfactory, overall. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 are at nationally expected levels and that pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, overall. However, standards in pupils' abilities to solve mathematical problems and in those achieved by higher-attaining pupils are not as high as they should be. Teachers are aware of this and the school is focusing on raising standards in these two areas. Overall, standards in mathematics are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

51. The school has recently introduced a useful new assessment and recording system to check on the progress pupils are making. This enables the school to identify successfully individuals or groups of pupils who need further help with their work. In this way, lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, overall, because they receive good levels of support from their teachers and teaching assistants. However, evidence from pupils' work indicates that higher-attaining pupils are not consistently provided with hard enough work because teachers do not have high enough expectations of their capabilities. There are no notable differences in attainment between boys and girls.
52. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Where teaching is good, teachers' expectations are high and they set tasks for pupils that are closely linked to their capabilities. Learning proceeds at a brisk pace, with teachers asking pupils questions that consolidate and extend their thinking. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this well to introduce new learning. Pupils are asked regularly to explain to their classmates how they calculated their answers and this helps others learn new ways of working out problems. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards mathematics. They listen well, co-operate well and apply themselves with enthusiasm. Pupils behave well because behaviour is very well managed. Teachers make good use of mathematical equipment and apparatus to help pupils understand what is being taught. Homework is used satisfactorily to extend what is learnt in school.
53. However, teaching is not always as positive as this. Higher-attaining pupils could reach higher standards if the work set for them was more challenging. More opportunities have been provided recently for pupils to solve mathematical problems and this is helping to raise the achievement of all pupils, but especially that of higher-attaining pupils. In some lessons, pupils are not given enough time to carry out their tasks and to reinforce and extend their learning. The conclusions of lessons are not always used well by all teachers to judge how well pupils of different abilities have learned. All teachers ask pupils how well they think they have achieved, but often the questioning is not sufficiently rigorous during this part of the lesson for teachers to know how well pupils have achieved. Marking does not always indicate to pupils how well pupils have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Overall, teaching is not as good as it was at the last inspection.
54. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory, overall. The school has taken positive action to introduce more problem-solving activities and this is beginning to raise standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and these should help teachers in setting targets for pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, at a high enough level. However, the new subject co-ordinator has not had enough opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The school has a plan in place for improvements in mathematics, but this does not currently focus enough on raising standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. There are examples of mathematics being used effectively in other subjects. For example, in history, pupils use a time-line to study the chronology of space travel. In science, pupils measure the distances toy cars travel on different surfaces when learning about friction. In ICT, they use computers to draw block graphs and pictograms and, in music, pupils learn to count the number of beats in a bar.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are gaining a good range of knowledge and understanding of science and they discuss scientific topics well
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and work well

- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out their own investigations and this slows down the rate at which pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, make progress
- Not enough time is allocated to science and standards are lower than they should be

### **Commentary**

56. Standards in Year 2 are at expected levels and the achievement of pupils is satisfactory, overall. This represents an improvement from the national test results in 2003, when standards were below average and the achievement of some pupils was unsatisfactory. However, higher-attaining pupils achieved well in these tests and reached standards that were well above average. Standards in science have declined since the last inspection.
57. Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of science. In Year 2, pupils make simple electric circuits and identify that a complete circuit is needed to make a bulb light. They investigate whether seeds need soil or water to germinate. All pupils can identify pushes and pulls as forces and a few talk about gravity and friction. They understand how materials change when heated. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to carry out their own investigations and their achievement in this aspect is unsatisfactory.
58. The teaching of science is satisfactory, overall, with some good features. In the best lessons, pupils work well together and enjoy finding things out for themselves. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to discuss their ideas with one another and this helps them in their learning as they check out their reasoning with their classmates. Teachers encourage pupils successfully to use correct scientific vocabulary and pupils use it confidently. In a few lessons observed, pupils are encouraged to think about how to solve problems, carry out a simple test in groups, report their findings and discuss possible reasons for their results. They are encouraged to make predictions about what they think will happen. However, there are not always sufficient resources for pupils to carry out investigations for themselves and this slows down their learning. A few investigations are carried out by teachers with pupils watching them. Teachers' questioning is effective, probing pupils' understanding about why they think something happens. In the best examples, marking informs pupils how they have done and how to improve, but this is not always the case. Overall, pupils are taught the same work and this results in some pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils, not making as much progress as they could because they could tackle harder work. A significant amount of the work seen was copied and this practice is unsatisfactory.
59. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The subject co-ordinator gives helpful advice to teachers about practical activities and investigations. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and has plans to observe the teaching of science. However, the monitoring that has taken place so far has not brought about improved standards. The school grounds provide a useful resource for investigative work. Not enough time is allocated to the subject and this does not allow pupils the opportunity for independent learning through investigation. Overall, there is not a sharp enough focus on raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Computers are used well to support learning across the curriculum and this helps pupils in their learning
- Pupils receive good help from their teachers and teaching assistants and this helps them learn well
- Teachers have good subject expertise and this helps pupils to learn effectively



- Assessment procedures are good

### **Commentary**

60. Standards in Year 2 are at nationally expected levels. Pupils use graphics skilfully to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. They use computers to produce and interpret data using block graphs and pictograms. They are developing their skills in word processing in a variety of contexts. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
61. Achievement is satisfactory, overall, and, sometimes, it is good. Pupils receive good help from their teachers and teaching assistants.
62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, and, sometimes, they are good. Teachers have good expertise in teaching how to use computers and their knowledge of programs is good. Pupils are given clear explanations about what to do next in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to computers are very good. They work with sustained concentration individually or in small groups. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and their behaviour is good.
63. Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory, overall. The subject co-ordinator was on maternity leave during the inspection. The co-ordinator has established a useful whole-school focus on planning ICT across the curriculum. The school has good procedures for assessment. Not enough monitoring and evaluation of ICT has taken place, meaning that the school does not fully know the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Overall, provision in ICT has improved since the last inspection.

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

64. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects. During the inspection ICT was being used as an aid to learning in literacy, mathematics, art and design and history. Computers were used to illustrate artefacts from the past in history.

### **HUMANITIES**

65. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection and no judgements can be made about the overall provision in **geography**. Samples of pupils' work were inspected and a discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator. Pupils are learning about aspects of the British Isles and other countries, such as India and Africa. They compare the physical features of different places and the way people live. Work on Africa was enriched by the African drumming day held in school.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good and standards are above expected levels
- Teachers use a variety of ways for teaching history and this keeps pupils' interest in the subject and helps them learn
- Lessons are planned well and provide pupils with good opportunities to handle and investigate artefacts from the past; however, the work set for higher-attaining pupils is not always pitched at a hard enough level
- The school does not fully know the strengths and weaknesses in history because lessons are not observed regularly enough

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above nationally expected levels in Year 2. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of key points in time and explain important events, such as the first moon landing. They know about the important characters of this time, such as Neil Armstrong, and give good reasons for his motives in becoming an astronaut. Pupils have very positive attitudes to history and clearly enjoy their learning. They apply themselves well and listen intently, both to their teachers and one another. The high standards commented on during the last inspection have been maintained.
67. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to enliven lessons. Pupils are provided with many good opportunities to discuss aspects of the past, and, in doing so, they often refer to good quality artefacts. They discuss their work well with one another. Teachers use drama and role-play successfully to help pupils to develop their understanding of historical events. Year 1 classrooms have well-thought-out “castle” role-play areas following a visit to Dover Castle. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning as they re-enact aspects of the visit they made to the castle a few weeks previously. Computers are used well as an aid to learning history. Teachers question pupils well to check and extend pupils’ understanding. Behaviour is very well managed and pupils behave well. However, the work pupils produce in history is not challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils. Marking in books does not help pupils improve or indicate how well they have achieved.
68. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. The subject co-ordinator has produced a good plan of action and has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. She gives teachers some good ideas for teaching the subject using a variety of teaching styles. History is well resourced with artefacts from the past. The new subject co-ordinator monitors teachers’ plans but has not had the opportunity to observe lessons. This means that the school is not yet fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**, overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school’s programme of work is good
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to consolidate their learning or improve their literacy skills by writing it down

## Commentary

69. Overall, not enough work in religious education was available to make a judgement over time about standards and the achievement of pupils. Standards in the three lessons observed were at expected levels and achievement was satisfactory, overall.
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. Lessons are planned thoughtfully and some interesting ways of helping pupils learn about and from religion are used. For example, one teacher brought into school a plant from home and used this as a means of saying to the class that this plant was damaged because she had not listened carefully enough to advice from another member of staff about carrying the plant from her car. Pupils were then asked to think about an occasion when they had not acted as they were told and used this as the means for pupils learning from the story from the Bible of the sower. Teachers’ plans indicate that enough time is allocated to religious education to teach satisfactorily the local education authority’s agreed syllabus as required by statute. Overall, pupils do not consolidate and extend their learning sufficiently in religious education by writing it down. Too often, pupils are asked to draw rather than to record their learning by writing. On these occasions, opportunities are lost for pupils to practise and improve the skills they have learnt in literacy.

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The school has produced detailed guidance that is very useful in helping teachers plan lessons. The new subject co-ordinator has begun to monitor and evaluate religious education. She has checked on teachers' plans and pupils' work, but has not observed teaching. The co-ordinator has outlined plans for the future development of the subject, but this does not focus enough on how standards will be improved. Overall, provision in religious education is not as good as it was at the last inspection.

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

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

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

- Standards are above expected levels and achievement is good; pupils learn a good range of artistic techniques
- Teaching and learning are good; teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and have good subject knowledge
- The subject is well led and managed

#### **Commentary**

72. Pupils achieve well in art and design and standards are above expected levels. There is clear evidence of improvement in the development of skills used in art and design throughout the school. Pupils design and make pictures and models confidently. They understand and use with considerable success a good range of artistic techniques. They develop their ideas for designs effectively. They are willing to discuss how they can improve their own and the work of others. The high quality of work on display makes a good contribution to the school's attractive and stimulating learning environment. Provision in art and design has improved since the last inspection.
73. Teaching and learning are good, and, occasionally, very good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, have very good subject expertise and use interesting and varied teaching techniques to suit the purposes of lessons. The pace of learning is good. However, on a few occasions, teachers do not show pupils well enough what they are to do and are unsure about what is expected of them.
74. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator has good subject expertise and provides sensitive, thorough and careful advice to colleagues. She has not yet had sufficient opportunity to influence the quality of teaching and learning by monitoring teaching in classrooms. The management of resources is good.
75. No teaching or pupils' work in **design and technology** was seen during the inspection. The school alternates design and technology with art and design, using national guidance. In this way, the requirements for teaching design and technology comply with statutory requirements. There has been little focus on the subject in recent years with the result that the subject is in need of review.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

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

- Singing is good across the school because pupils are taught effectively
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to music and enjoy lessons
- Teaching is good because the specialist teacher has high expectations of pupils' achievement
- A number of additional musical activities are provided for pupils and this helps them learn well
- Music is well led and managed

### Commentary

76. Standards in singing are above expected levels and pupils achieve well in this aspect of music. Lack of evidence means that no judgements have been made about other aspects of music.
77. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident when singing. This is a strength of the school. Pupils sing with clear diction, in tune, and loudly or quietly when directed to do so. They have a good sense of rhythm, which they use well to help them co-ordinate their movements to accompany many songs. A variety of teaching methods is used which holds pupils' concentration throughout lessons. The teaching of whole-school singing is very effective because new tunes are sung well by the teacher and then repeated by pupils. Pupils learn to use the correct musical vocabulary. They are given good opportunities to listen to and reflect on different styles of music. Lessons in music are often linked effectively to the work pupils are carrying out in lessons.
78. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and this ensures that they achieve well. Lessons are planned and prepared well, with activities that interest and involve pupils. This helps them make good progress in the subject. Music lessons are taught effectively in year groups by a specialist teacher and these are followed up by class teachers later in the week. This gives pupils a good opportunity to practise and build on the skills they have learnt in the year group lessons. Although some instrumental work was seen taking place during the year group lessons, most composition occurs during classroom teaching.
79. Additional activities provide pupils with further good opportunities to develop their musical skills. Pupils perform in a variety of school assemblies and concerts and join pupils from other schools in local events; for example, the spring Infant Music Festival in Maidstone and the Promenade Concert at Leeds Castle during the summer term. Recorded music is used effectively in physical education lessons. A range of musicians visits the school to conduct workshops and perform for pupils. These include an African drumming workshop, an Indian dancer and a shake, rattle and roll percussion group.
80. The subject is well led and managed. The teacher succeeds in promoting a high profile for the subject and in conveying her own enthusiasm for the subject to staff and pupils. She regularly finds new music to ensure that a wide range of different styles of music from different cultures is taught. All pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have equal opportunity to take part in all musical activities, regardless of their ability. The school has improved upon the standards seen at the previous inspection, largely as a result of the enthusiastic expertise of the specialist teacher.
81. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to form judgements about the overall provision in **physical education**. Nevertheless, some evidence was gained from a discussion with the subject co-ordinator and an analysis of school records. One lesson was observed. This shows that the National Curriculum is taught as required. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator observes teaching and learning in order to monitor the use of resources. However, there is insufficient rigour in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in order to gain an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of standards and achievement within the subject.

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

82. The school's provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education** is particularly effective. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Their personal development is progressing very well and pupils are maturing into sensible young citizens. Each teacher teaches lessons in personal, social and health education and during these pupils are often encouraged to make their own personal contribution in turn to the topic being discussed. Pupils value these lessons because they feel that their ideas are being listened to sensibly and with respect by their classmates and teacher.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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