

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PAINTERS ASH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Northfleet, Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118491

Headteacher: Mrs P Jay

Lead inspector: Mr R Sharman

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September– 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 260582

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:	400
School address:	Masefield Road Northfleet Gravesend
Postcode:	DA11 8EL
Telephone number:	01474 568991
Fax number:	01474 568991
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Bowman
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an above average sized primary school with 400 pupils. The numbers of boys and girls are broadly similar, but with imbalances in a number of year groups. The school serves a residential area of mainly owner-occupied housing where pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances. Approximately a quarter of the pupils has been identified as having special educational needs, a proportion that is broadly average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational need. Approximately ten per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and of these, five per cent have English as an additional language, with a small minority at an early stage of learning to speak English. The largest group of pupils from minority ethnic origins is from Asian backgrounds. A few pupils are in public care. On entry, pupils show the full range of abilities but overall attainment is average, with a significant minority with below average skills in speaking and listening. Few pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual time of admission and transfer.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1696	Mr R Sharman	Lead inspector	Art and design Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs
31758	Mr E Tipper	Lay inspector	
28170	Mr I Chearman	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education
10270	Ms S Teacher	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
30438	Mr R Guest	Team inspector	English History Music English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides its pupils with a sound education and gives satisfactory value for money.** Standards in English and mathematics are rising in Year 2 and have been maintained in Year 6. This is largely due to the competent teaching and the commitment of teachers to help pupils to do their best. The headteacher has set a clear educational direction for the work of the school but the collective leadership and management of the school is unsatisfactory and has led to improvement slowing down.

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

- The standards attained in Years 2 and 6 are above average in science.
- Pupils' personal development is good and is reflected in the good attitudes, good behaviour and keenness to learn.
- The pupils are well cared for and this gives them confidence to learn.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is good and enriches the curriculum.
- The overall leadership and management are unsatisfactory and this hinders the school's development.
- The standards attained in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average.
- Insufficient use is made of the information from assessment to plan pupils' work.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, standards in English and mathematics are higher now. Teaching has improved, especially planning. Sound procedures have been established for the assessment of pupils' standards and their progress in English, mathematics and science but these arrangements have not been extended to most other subjects. Resources have been improved, particularly the provision of two libraries. Health and safety arrangements are now good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	E	B	B
mathematics	C	C	C	C
science	C	C	C	C

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

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** In reception, the children's achievement is satisfactory. In their personal and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and creative development, most are on track to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on their physical development or on their knowledge and understanding of the world. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is also satisfactory in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are average in English and mathematics. The standards attained in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in science and below average in ICT.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy their time at school. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** Overall, the teaching is satisfactory and a significant proportion of it is good. Pupils work hard. Teaching in reception is good. The strengths in the teaching across the school lie in the good management of pupils, the effective partnership with teaching assistants and thorough preparation. Lessons are well structured to enable pupils to gain new knowledge and skills. At times this leads to few opportunities being provided for pupils to develop independence in their learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers are supportive of pupils with English as an additional language at an early stage of learning English. Teachers regularly assess their pupils' standards but do not use this information well enough to track pupils' progress and to provide different and more challenging tasks where necessary. The curriculum is satisfactory and the care, guidance and support pupils are provided with are good. Links with parents are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and has set a clear and appropriate direction to the work of the school. The collective leadership of the school, however, is unsatisfactory. The governors manage the school's finances and accommodation well. However, the governors do not have a good enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work to hold the school to account regarding standards and the quality of education. The management arrangements within the school are not working effectively. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluation are not as good as they should be and developments are taking too long to get off the ground.

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

Overall, parents are satisfied with the quality of education the school provides. They particularly appreciate that their children like going to school, that the teaching is good and that their children make progress. A significant minority of parents who replied to the questionnaire, as well as those who attended the meeting prior to the inspection, have concerns about the running of the school. A small minority has concerns about bullying. High priority is given by the school to dealing with bullying. Pupils speak well of their school and feel well supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Review the management structure to ensure that monitoring and evaluation are undertaken effectively and that planned developments are carried forward efficiently.
- Ensure that governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that they are in a good position to influence and support the work of the school.
- Establish arrangements to assess the pupils' work in all subjects and to make better use of the information from assessment to plan work.
- Raise standards in ICT.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement across the school from reception to Year 6 is **satisfactory**. In science, achievement is good and pupils attain above average standards but in ICT, standards are below average and pupils underachieve. The achievement of boys and girls is broadly similar. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily, as do pupils with English as an additional language who are at the early stages of acquiring English. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory. Standards in English and mathematics are average. Children in reception are on track to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in their personal and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and creative development. No judgement was made on their physical development or of their knowledge and understanding of the world as there was insufficient evidence.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science where standards are above average.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are rising.
- In ICT, standards are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (13.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.7 (10.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.8 (15.2)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (25.3)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.4 (27.1)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.1 (28.9)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The National Curriculum test results in 2002 showed that compared with schools nationally, pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science. When compared with schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2, standards were broadly similar. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attained standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The proportion was above average in all three subjects when compared with similar schools.
2. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 showed that, compared with schools nationally, standards were below average in reading, well below



average in writing and average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 that reached higher standards was below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics.

3. The standards in science seen during the inspection were above average and pupils achieve well. These standards are higher than those reached in the national tests in 2002. The provisional results for the 2003 national tests confirm these better standards, especially the proportion of pupils who attained high standards. Pupils do well in science because the curriculum is carefully organised so that scientific skills are developed effectively. The sound teaching ensures that practical activities are stressed. Pupils respond well to the teaching. They are keen to learn and enjoy the practical activities that are provided.
4. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are rising and standards are broadly average. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. This improvement is reflected in the unvalidated national test results in 2003. These show that more pupils in Year 2 reach standards higher than those expected for their age in writing and mathematics. The improvement in writing is striking in that fourteen per cent reached these standards whereas no pupil had attained them in 2002 and only one per cent of pupils in the year before that. Improvements made in reading have been maintained.
5. The school's focus for improvement over the past two years has been on English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Central to the improvement in reading and writing has been the effective and consistent implementation of the outcomes of the review of the teaching of literacy initiated by the headteacher and undertaken in partnership with a university college. This has improved the teaching which is consistent and is at least satisfactory. The support for pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of acquiring English is satisfactory. In mathematics, the continued sound implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, backed up by competent teaching, has led to more pupils attaining higher standards.
6. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory. Overall, standards are below average. Although there has been an improvement in the number of computers since the last inspection, the curriculum has not improved sufficiently. Whilst pupils in Years 1 and 6 reach satisfactory standards in using ICT to find things out and to share ideas, they do not reach the expected standards for pupils of their age in using ICT to develop ideas and to make things happen. ICT is not used enough in other subjects and this hinders pupils' progress. The teaching of ICT seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The unsatisfactory management of the curriculum as a whole has led to aspects of the ICT curriculum not being sufficiently planned for and inadequate resources to enable pupils to achieve as well as they should.
7. At the time of the inspection, children in reception had only been in school for three weeks on a part-time basis. The good teaching has enabled the children to settle down and to make a good start to school. Most children are on track to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in their personal and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and creative development. No judgement was made on their physical development and on their knowledge and understanding of the world but the assessment made at the end of the summer term showed that most children in reception last year reached these goals.

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

Pupils' attitudes to their work and towards others in the school are **good** and their overall behaviour is **good**. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Both attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. The quality of provision is similar to that reported at the last inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils speak well of their school.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative, which help to build up their confidence and self-esteem.
- The identification of behavioural problems within the school and implementation of strategies to address them work well in controlling the inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils.
- The school enables pupils to develop a good range of social skills and instils in them a strong moral code.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to explore other peoples' cultures.
- Not enough is being done to improve levels of attendance.

## Commentary

8. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the school. Older pupils felt that the teaching is supportive and that when they have difficulties, teachers are helpful and patient. The responses to the questionnaire completed prior to the inspection confirm the views pupils expressed during the inspection.
9. Each year group has a specific area of responsibility within the school, from Year 2, who help in the playground for the younger pupils, to pupils in Year 6, who help children in reception and act as school receptionists during lunchtime breaks. In addition, they assist in a number of other areas such as the dining hall and bookshop. These opportunities enhance their personal development. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are an integral part of the behaviour management system, operating as 'playground buddies' for others who feel unhappy or threatened for any reason. The school council, consisting of a boy and girl from each class selected by their classmates, allows its members to exercise responsibility in representing the views of others. In a council meeting during the inspection they were seen to do this very confidently and came up with some very worthwhile suggestions.
10. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good. It is accepted by parents, pupils and teachers that there are some pupils who find it difficult to behave appropriately throughout the day and that some bullying takes place. This is of concern to a small minority of those parents who replied to the questionnaire. To address these issues, a clear set of rewards and punishments have been developed, which are understood by pupils and supported by parents. In addition, the school community is very open in the way it addresses situations as they arise. Behaviour was openly discussed in several personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and activities known as circle times. In one, for example, a pupil complained of being 'picked on' and the teacher effectively changed the focus of the lesson to concentrate on the specific situation. There followed an honest and open discussion led skilfully by the teacher where all the issues were fully discussed and clear guidelines reinforced. Dealing with bullying is given a high priority and is effective. Pupils report that bullying is taken seriously and that the amount of bullying has decreased and is currently at a low level.
11. Good provision is made overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught respect for other people and their belongings through their lessons and by the direct example of adults within the school. Through the constant reinforcement of the school code of conduct and class rules they are also taught the principles of 'right and wrong'. Pupils are learning to live harmoniously with each other in an increasingly multi-racial environment and also to address visitors in a polite and courteous way. PSHE lessons are instrumental in allowing pupils to appreciate the effects of their actions on others and to understand their feelings and emotions. These lessons also help to develop social skills that are effectively promoted through the many opportunities to take responsibility and to meet other people through the school's links with the local community.
12. Pupils are given opportunities to experience their own culture through visits to theatres,

museums and art galleries but their understanding of the cultures of other peoples is limited. There is no planned approach to developing this through subject lessons although a presentation by a visitor to Year 6, which took the pupils on a virtual tour of Borneo, was a good example of how to provide pupils with an appreciation of how people in other cultures live. The school is addressing this issue through the recent appointment of a co-ordinator with a responsibility to develop a multicultural dimension to the curriculum and to raise the profile of this work across the school.

## Attendance

13. Attendance, which has remained fairly static over the last five years, is in line with the national average. The completion of registers has improved since the last inspection but there is little analysis of the attendance figures to identify patterns of non-attendance by individuals, between classes and by ethnic grouping. Not enough emphasis is placed on improving attendance, for example by promoting a greater emphasis on its importance to parents and pupils, especially in the discouragement of taking holidays in term-time. The lack of a computerised system inhibits the improvement of attendance but a system is in the process of being introduced.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.5

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
315	2	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
4	0	0
24	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
45	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The school takes good care of its pupils and has good links with local schools and colleges and with the local community. The curriculum is satisfactory and the accommodation is good. The quality of assessment and the use of information gained are unsatisfactory.



## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in reception is good.
- Teachers clearly explain how tasks should be completed and show pupils how to improve their work.
- Thorough preparation of materials for lessons.
- Teachers manage lessons effectively.
- Pupils work hard and are interested in what they are doing.
- Not enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning.
- Good arrangements to assess pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- Lack of systematic arrangements to assess pupils' standards and their progress in most other subjects.
- Insufficient use of assessment to track pupils' progress, to set targets for them to aim for, and to plan the curriculum.

### Commentary

14. Teaching in reception is good and has enabled the children to settle into school successfully in the three weeks since the new school year began. These children have made a good start. Relationships are good and children are happy and secure in their work. Planning is thorough and is drawn effectively from the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly assess to see how well children are doing. This information is used effectively so that activities are well matched to children's learning needs. Sound support is provided for pupils with English as an additional language who are at the early stages of acquiring spoken English. Adults take extra care when explaining activities to them. Very good use is made of a parent who comes in each morning to work alongside children using their first language. The teachers have a limited experience in working with early learners of English and would benefit from further training.
15. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants in reception contributes a good deal towards the good progress children make. An effective balance is struck between the number of activities that teachers direct and the opportunities for children to make choices from the broad range of activities. The teaching and the activities interest the children who concentrate on the task in hand. Teachers make the most of the limited outdoor space. The good quality of teaching mentioned in the previous report has been maintained.
16. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is both satisfactory and competent. The quality of teaching is consistent and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when at times it was unsatisfactory. This improvement reflects the attention given to the raising of standards, especially in Years 1 and 2. Pupils work hard in lessons and are usually interested in what they are doing. A strength in the teaching is the teachers' management of pupils. Teachers make it clear through their relationships with pupils that they want them to do well. In conversation, older pupils cite this as a reason why they think their school is good. The support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers take due account of the individual education plans of those pupils who require them. The teaching assistants who work with their individual pupils provide effective support. The few pupils in Years 1 to 6 who are at an early stage of learning to speak English are satisfactorily supported by their teachers. As in reception, teachers have limited experience in this area of their work and would benefit from further training.
17. Overall, lessons are well organised and proceed at a satisfactory pace. They are planned and prepared thoroughly; special attention is given to what pupils are to learn. Lessons usually start

with the teacher writing the learning intention on the board and checking that the pupils understand what the purpose of the lesson is. At times, teachers refer to this as the target for the lesson. This leads to a degree of confusion for pupils as the word 'target' is also used to indicate what groups of pupils are trying to get better at in writing.

18. Most teachers effectively use a common teaching strategy in which they show pupils how to complete work. For example, in English lessons, teachers will often write pupils' sentences on the board and then work with them to improve the grammar, vocabulary and punctuation on the piece that has been written. Teachers make good use of questions to probe and check pupils' understanding. This approach helps pupils to make sound progress in gaining new skills and knowledge. In many lessons an over-reliance on questioning and responding to individual pupils reduces the opportunities for discussion by the pupils themselves and for teachers to take account of their views. The responses of pupils to the questionnaire prior to the inspection reflect this to a degree. The current school growth plan includes the development of 'pupil autonomy' but it is not clear where responsibility lies for this and the initiative has not yet started.
19. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in developing efficient arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. Little progress has been made in the other subjects. A weakness in the school's management is that it is not clear where responsibility for this lies; whether it is with the leadership team or with co-ordinators. A useful start has been made in using ICT to collate for analysis the results of national tests and tests set by the school. Overall, the information from assessment is not used effectively to plan work and to track pupils' progress. Often in lessons, the more able pupils have either broadly similar or slightly harder work than the average pupils and have to complete it unaided by the teacher. Rarely do they have work that is significantly different and requires them to think in more challenging ways and as a result they are not stretched often enough. Pupils have targets to aim for in writing but these are not linked sharply enough to information from assessment. Whilst a number of teachers provide pupils with useful advice when marking, not enough attention is paid to this in the marking of pupils' work.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	1 ( 2%)	20 (44%)	25 (54%)	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.*

**The curriculum**

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum that covers all subjects, and is relevant to the ages and interests of all its pupils. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, collective worship, and for the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils have good opportunities to enrich learning. The good accommodation supports effective learning. There are sufficient staff to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum and levels of resources are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good provision is made for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Extra-curricular activities, visits and community involvement are good.
- The swimming pool and school grounds enhance provision.
- The management of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Planning for ICT does not ensure that all aspects of the subject are given sufficient attention.

## Commentary

20. There is a broad curriculum, with a good focus on literacy and numeracy, and a satisfactory emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects, except ICT. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are satisfactorily implemented so that pupils are given a sound grounding in basic skills. The teaching of French enriches the curriculum. Good care is taken to make sure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of its pupils. Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers plan well so that generally pupils make steady progress as they move through the school. Good arrangements are in place for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education, including the appropriate teaching of sex education and the dangers of the misuse of drugs. Teachers promote these areas effectively with good teaching and a well-structured programme which is an integral part of the aims and aspirations of the school. The swimming pool and extensive school grounds enhance the provision for physical education.
21. All groups of pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Sound individual education plans are in place for those pupils who require them. The support provided for pupils with a statement of their needs is in line with that required by the statement. Satisfactory support is provided for the few pupils who are at the early stages in learning spoken English. Good induction arrangements and links with pre-school providers ensure that new pupils settle in confidently. There are good relationships and effective links with local secondary schools and pupils enter a well-organised transfer process as they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
22. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including the arts, enriches learning. Pupils have good sporting opportunities and access to competitive sport, where they do well. Good use is made of the local community for resources and for visits and this extends pupils' learning. Year 6 had an excellent input by a visitor into learning about rainforests during the inspection that inspired the pupils to find out more. Pupils benefit from well-planned visits to museums and galleries. Older pupils go to Bowles Centre for outdoor adventurous pursuits, giving them the opportunity to develop socially in a new, but secure, environment.
23. Overall, the management of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Systematic arrangements have not been established to monitor the curriculum provision. This has led to aspects of ICT not being taught in sufficient depth and standards slipping. At the moment, the governing body does not have effective links with subject co-ordinators. The growth plan includes the development of more links across the curriculum. However, there are no clear plans to move this project further. Good innovation takes place in the teaching of music where the specialist music teacher works alongside colleagues in order to help them to become more independent in the teaching of the new music scheme. Staff are hardworking and conscientious. Apart from aspects of ICT, resources are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the provision of libraries. The buildings and school grounds are of good quality and the governing body's strategic management of these assets is good.

## Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety provision is **good**. The school's provision for support, advice and guidance is **good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good procedures are in place for care, welfare, health and safety, particularly risk assessment (which was an issue in the previous report).
- Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the promotion of health and safety.

- Careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' personal development, both at school and through contact with parents at home.
- Good induction arrangements.
- Satisfactory support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils at an early stage in learning spoken English.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting and reviewing personal targets.

### Commentary

24. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good, as it was at the last inspection. This provision gives the pupils confidence to learn. Child protection procedures are secure. The policy is implemented effectively and is in line with that of local child protection procedures. Staff are kept up to date with procedures and the school's relationship with Kent's social services is good. The few pupils in public care are effectively supported and the necessary arrangements with social services are in place.
25. Arrangements for dealing with injuries and accidents are good, with accidents and the administration of medicines recorded correctly. The school's arrangements for health and safety and risk assessment are regularly checked. Improvement since the last inspection in matters of health and safety has been good. The areas for improvement identified in the last report have been properly dealt with. This reflects the effective work of the environment sub-committee of the governing body.
26. Teachers and teaching assistants get to know their pupils well, which enables them to keep a watchful eye on them. This is particularly helpful when pupils have problems, both educationally and socially. The pupils' responses to their questionnaire showed that they feel well looked after. The school provides effectively for new arrivals and has useful systems in place to keep track of how they are settling in, enabling the school to provide appropriate advice, support and guidance. Good thought has been given to ensure that pupils in Year 1 settle in well to the main school, for example by organising their lunch in their former classrooms. Pupils in Year 6 follow a smooth transition process to their chosen secondary schools.
27. Sound support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Effective arrangements are in place to identify these pupils. Useful plans with clear targets to aim for are drawn up in response to their individual needs and pupils make satisfactory progress. The few pupils with English as an additional language who are at an early stage in learning spoken English have satisfactory support from their teachers.
28. The school involves pupils in the running of the school, seeking their views through the school council and, where appropriate, acting on them. For example, pupils are pleased that the school council has proposed new playground arrangements. The school is seeking to involve pupils more in their own learning but this initiative has not got off the ground. More needs to be done to involve pupils more fully in setting and reviewing personal targets.

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

The school has developed a **satisfactory** partnership with its pupils, parents and carers. It has established **good** links with the local community and with other schools and colleges.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information provided for parents, in terms of regular newsletters and leaflets describing the topics to be covered in lessons, encourages parents' involvement in their children's learning.
- Links with the local community benefit pupils' academic and personal development.



- The school has developed a number of good joint activities with secondary schools and a university college to the benefit of the pupils' overall academic progress.
- The school has recently experienced a breakdown in its relationship with a significant minority of its parents.

## Commentary

29. The school provides a regular flow of newsletters, approximately four per term, which gives parents detailed information on what is happening in school, celebrates the achievements of pupils and provides an updated diary of events. Each class also sends a leaflet home at the beginning of each term which usefully outlines the areas of learning to be covered in each subject. These are valuable in enabling parents to assist their children in their learning. For parents of children joining the reception class, the booklet 'Getting ready for school' is also a very good introduction to what their children are to be taught and the teaching method. Parents' meetings are held each term and parents who attended the meeting held before the inspection reported that these were useful. The school's annual questionnaire sent to parents each year had a twenty-two per cent return and indicated positive views on how parents are kept informed.
30. Of the parents who answered the parents' questionnaire (forty per cent), twenty-seven per cent felt that their views about the school were not adequately sought nor were their suggestions or concerns taken into account by the school. Nineteen per cent of responses indicated feeling uncomfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem or complaint. These responses reflected a situation at the time of the inspection where relationships had become strained between the headteacher and governing body, and a number of parents, in particular with those involved in the parent teacher association. Despite there being support for the school from the majority of parents, the uneasy relationship with some parents is having a negative impact on the morale of the school. The headteacher and the governing body, together with the parent teacher association, have made a start to repair their relationships.
31. In response to concerns about standards of literacy within the school, the headteacher initiated a project with a local university college. This proved successful in helping the school carry out a thorough self-evaluation of its current system of teaching in literacy and enabling it to make good improvements. The school also has several worthwhile links with its local secondary schools that have a direct impact on the pupils' learning. For example, a teacher from one takes pupils in Years 5 and 6 for French while pupils from another run a recorder group at the school during lunchtime.
32. The school has many links with the local community, which enhance learning. Each year group goes on at least one visit to places such as a countryside park, a farm, a museum and the theatre. In addition, representatives from organisations such as the police, nursing service and churches visit the school. There are also close links with the nearby residential home for the elderly with pupils visiting it to deliver gifts at harvest-time and to sing carols at Christmas. In return, the residents help support the school's fund-raising efforts and attend concerts and plays. The local Member of Parliament visits the school and one of the school's pupils won a competition to design his House of Commons Christmas card. The mayor is also a visitor and, in return, the school council is allowed to hold a meeting once a year in the local council's chambers.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**.

The governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The governing body does little to hold the school to account for standards attained, and the quality of education and its impact on the development of the

school is slight. The headteacher has set a clear direction to the school's work and provides satisfactory leadership. However, the overall leadership of the school is unsatisfactory. Management arrangements in the school are not working properly and the overall management is unsatisfactory. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation are not effective and planned developments are in danger of not being implemented successfully.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has led positive initiatives to raise standards, particularly the review of the literacy work of the school, led externally but in close collaboration with the staff.
- Staff are supportive of each other and work well together.
- The governors do not have a good enough understanding of the quality of educational provision to enable them to hold the school to account and aid its development.
- The leadership team is frequently by-passed and is ineffective.
- Management arrangements do not have clearly defined lines of responsibility or accountability and are not effective in moving the school forward quickly enough.
- Not enough attention is given to the principles of giving best value.

### **Commentary**

33. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school's work, with a particular focus on the raising of standards, especially in Years 1 and 2, and on broadening the curriculum. The outcomes of the effective literacy review undertaken with a university college, working in close collaboration with the staff, have contributed to an improvement in standards in writing in Year 2. Good attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils benefit from the education that the school provides. A co-ordinator has been recently appointed to oversee the support for pupils with English as an additional language and to improve the multicultural aspect of the school's work. Already a sound start has been made as the co-ordinator is enthusiastic and clear about the role and where responsibility for the work lies. At the time of the last inspection the overall leadership and management was judged to be sound.
34. The satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection is now slowing. The leadership provided by the leadership team is currently ineffective. The focus is too much on organisational matters rather than on moving the school forward. The leadership team is often by-passed, with co-ordinators and team leaders going directly to the headteacher or raising issues in a staff meeting. This has resulted in planned developments not getting off the ground, as it is not clear who is to lead them.
35. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties and provides support for the senior managers. It manages its finances satisfactorily and ensures that the accommodation is in good condition. The work of the environment sub-committee is effective in determining the future development of the accommodation. There are few systematic arrangements for the governing body to obtain information about the school's work. Consequently, the governing body does not have a good enough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and does little to hold the school to account.
36. The management arrangements in the school are not working properly. Subject co-ordinators have been established, often with a colleague from the other key stage to aid continuity. Overall, their work is hindered by the lack of time provided by the school for them to observe lessons. In addition, team leaders have been established with responsibility for two or three year groups. The leaders do not have job descriptions and so subject co-ordinators are not clear as to where their responsibilities lie in relation to the team leaders. The management plan for the school indicates that both team leaders and subject co-ordinators should report to the leadership team, which would then use the information for the development of the school. This is not happening and gaps are appearing. For example, standards are below average in ICT.

37. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. The lack of effective leadership by the leadership team does not make the most of the staff's hard work. Ideas for development are taken up by individuals directly with the headteacher, rather than the leadership team, so that development becomes piecemeal. This is the case with the current focus on curriculum innovation. Co-ordinators have had leadership responsibility delegated to them but the current operation of the management structure does not enable them to effectively fulfil this role. There are no clear management arrangements whereby the leadership team and co-ordinators can readily evaluate curriculum provision and initiatives in terms of the effects these have on the quality of pupils' learning. This lack of rigour is hindering more rapid pupil progress.
38. Effective induction procedures for staff are in place, as are arrangements for performance management, but the systems for enabling staff to obtain professional development opportunities are not based enough on the school's growth plan, mainly due to the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.
39. Overall, not enough attention is paid to the principles of best value. The governing body successfully applies these principles in the management of the accommodation. Parents are consulted each year through a questionnaire seeking their views on a range of issues. However, not enough attention is given by the senior leadership of the school and by the governors to challenging themselves to improve their work.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	897,555
Total expenditure	860,489
Expenditure per pupil	2,157

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	44,734
Balance carried forward to the next	37,066

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

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

The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage is one of the strengths of the school. The children enter reception with a wide range of attainment. A significant minority of children have below average skills in speaking and listening when they start school. Overall, attainment on entry is average. Teachers concentrate on the development of language and social skills and this enables children to make a successful start to their time in school. Children with lower levels of attainment on entry make good progress as a result of the good teaching and achieve well. Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory. The teachers manage the provision well and the children's progress is carefully monitored. The good provision mentioned in the previous report has been maintained.

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

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

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

- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are good.
- Children are interested and motivated to learn.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to plan what they are going to do.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate.

#### **Commentary**

40. At the time of the inspection, children had only been in school for three weeks and were still attending on a part-time basis. Teachers were placing considerable emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development. In this short time, teachers and teaching assistant have established good relationships with the children, who are interested in what they are doing. Their achievement is satisfactory. Early indications are that most children are on track to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.
41. Useful opportunities are provided by the good teaching for pupils to plan their work. The children sit in a circle whilst the teacher explains carefully what is on offer. Once they have decided what they want to do, the children take their name card and place it in a slot in a wallet corresponding to that activity. As they change activities, a good number of children transfer their name card into the correct slot. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good opportunities and encouragement for children to collaborate, for example as they work in a group with plastic pipes to make a web for the spider they are learning about in a nursery rhyme.

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

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

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

- Teachers pay considerable attention to teaching children about the links between sounds and letters.
- Conversation is encouraged.
- Books are used well and reading is actively encouraged.
- Although speaking and listening is encouraged not enough emphasis is placed on this in the teachers' choice for teacher-directed activities.

## Commentary

42. The good teaching gives emphasis to teaching children about the links between sounds and letters and children achieve well in this aspect. Each day teachers gather their group together to focus their teaching on the sounds letters make. Often a letter is chosen as the focus for the week. During the inspection the focus was on the letter 'f'. Children play a well-structured series of games. For example, the teacher had collected a number of objects whose name started with 'f' and placed them on a tray covered with a cloth. Children predicted what they thought might be on the tray and were delighted when they were found to be correct. Teachers and teaching assistants model the sound a letter makes carefully, showing children how to shape their mouth to make the required sound. Children try hard to make the correct sound and readily repeat the sound once they see the letter. The children are on track to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and their achievement is satisfactory.
43. Conversation is encouraged by teachers and teaching assistants in the groups they work with and when children work without adults. Teachers strike a sound balance between initiating conversation and joining in with those already initiated by children. Not enough attention is being currently given to speaking and listening in the teachers' choice of focused activities for the children. Satisfactory support is provided for the few children who are at an early stage in learning to speak English. The teachers have a limited experience in this area and would benefit from further training. Good use is made of a parental volunteer who speaks the children's first language. Books are well displayed and teachers regularly read stories out loud, for example in snack time. Stories are used effectively by teachers who encourage children to predict what will happen next. Children regularly take books home to share with parents or carers and this enhances their learning. Teachers regularly show children how to write and provide writing activities in role-play areas. For example, diaries are provided with the telephones.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good range of mathematical activities.
- The use of mathematical language is encouraged.

## Commentary

44. Children are on track to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and their achievement is satisfactory. The good teaching provides a wide range of opportunities for children's mathematical development. They successfully count on as the register is taken. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their mathematical language, for example when they roll out play dough and the teacher engages them in conversation in which children identify which is the longer and which is the shorter.
45. Teachers plan effectively to link mathematical activities to the work in other areas. Children play a game where they roll a dice, correctly recognise the number and successfully match that number to the body of the spider they are making as part of the ongoing work from a nursery rhyme about 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Children pour water into a cylinder to float a spider to the top and begin to predict how much more water will be needed. Most children have made a good start in recognising shapes such as a square, triangle and rectangle.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

46. Due to the children's part-time attendance at this time of the term it was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards. Children have made a good start with the use of ICT. They successfully use a mouse to operate programs. With help from adults they competently use a program that enables them to draw shapes and make patterns. Effective use was made of the limited outdoor space for children to use large constructional materials, for example when they constructed a large web from pipes for their spider to use.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

47. As the children were only attending on a part-time basis during the inspection it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards. The limited outdoor provision limits the opportunities for children's physical development.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work with a wide range of materials.
- Role-play is not as developed as the other provision for creative development.

### Commentary

48. Overall, children are on track to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Their role-play is not as advanced as the other aspects of their creative development. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to explore colour and shape as they paint. Children competently explore what happens when they mix colours as seen in the display of their paintings. With help from adults they satisfactorily use ICT to make patterns and draw shapes. Children enjoy the opportunities to work on a large scale as they illustrate the characters in the nursery rhymes they are learning. Regular opportunities are provided to sing songs and nursery rhymes.
49. A role-play area has been satisfactorily created by the teachers, together with opportunities for pupils to use telephones to develop their play. Although adults do become involved in their play this is not systematic enough to extend the children's thinking and develop their skills in speaking and listening. One notable exception occurred when a parent engaged a child at an early stage of learning spoken English in a conversation on a telephone in the child's first language. Dates were made in 'diaries' following a long conversation. When the area became free a number of other children who had been watching them engaged in similar activity.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are broadly average in reading and writing. In Year 6, the standards are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and the few at an early stage in learning to speak English achieve satisfactorily as they receive sound support.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 continue to improve.
- Satisfactory and consistent teaching in the subject throughout the school.
- Pupils apply themselves with sustained concentration and positive attitudes.
- The implementation of the 2002 literacy review continues to have a positive impact on standards, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Information from assessment of pupils' standards and their progress is not used enough to plan work which is effectively matched to what pupils need to learn next.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop speaking with confidence in a variety of contexts are limited by teachers' over-reliance on questioning individuals in lessons.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

## Commentary

50. The standards attained in the national tests by pupils in Year 6 have varied considerably since the last inspection. Having been average for two years, standards dropped considerably in 2001 and then were above average in 2002. These variations year by year reflect the make up of particular groups of pupils. When national comparative data for the 2003 tests is available, it is likely that in Year 6 standards in English will be average.
51. The concentration on the teaching of writing is beginning to pay dividends with rising standards in Years 1 and 2. A significant number of pupils in Year 2 now reach standards in writing that are higher than those expected for pupils of this age. Very few pupils have reached these standards in the recent past. In line with the school's growth plan, together with the recommendations from the literacy review, emphasis is placed on the teaching of writing. Central to this development has been the setting of targets for pupils to aim for in their writing. Initially these were for the class as a whole, but more recently targets for groups of pupils have been identified. Targets are well displayed in classrooms so that pupils know what they are aiming for. At times teachers refer to the learning intention for a lesson as a target and this confuses pupils.
52. Emphasis is given to enable older pupils to write for a satisfactory range of purposes. Pupils are interested in this and take pride in the books they have written themselves. Standards in writing in Year 6 are rising but not to the same extent as in Years 1 and 2. Handwriting is developing systematically but skills learnt in handwriting sessions are not always transferred to pupils' general written work. Pupils are encouraged to plan and redraft their writing. Arrangements where older pupils write in collaboration with younger pupils provide an effective means of continuing the improvement in their writing. Insufficient use is made of ICT to enable pupils to edit and redraft their work.
53. Teaching is satisfactory across the school, with a significant proportion of good teaching. This enables pupils to make sound progress. Pupils learn to read and write with increasing confidence, fluency and understanding. Good attention is given in Years 1 and 2 to the teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics). Regular opportunities are provided for younger pupils to read in a group with a teacher. At times, some pupils do not get the fullest benefit of group reading sessions where they have not yet sufficient skills to read independently. A number of parents attending the meeting held before the inspection expressed concerns about the number of opportunities pupils have to read.
54. A good feature of learning is the pupils' positive attitudes towards the work they are given. They apply themselves well and concentrate for long periods, and this enables them to make sound gains in their learning. Lessons are well planned to build on earlier work but tasks are often quite similar for all pupils, with a degree of extra challenge for the more able and support from an adult for those who need extra help. Planning does not yet take sufficient account of the information provided by the assessments made. The targets set for groups to aim for are not

sufficiently informed by the assessment information. This will be necessary if standards are to rise further.

55. Overall, standards of speaking and listening are in line with those expected nationally. Teachers use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and to consolidate their learning. Often this is on an individual basis that limits pupils' opportunities to express their ideas and to discuss the ideas of others. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to develop greater independence in their learning are missed.
56. The two co-ordinators collaborate effectively and are committed to raising standards further. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The management of the subject is satisfactory and its impact is seen in the rising standards. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinators to lead developments across the school, as there are no effective arrangements to achieve this. Resources are satisfactory and the two libraries are well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction; this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

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

57. Satisfactory use is made of the skills pupils acquire in English lessons in other subjects. Teachers make sound use of the opportunities provided in other subjects to consolidate pupils' skills in writing, for example in a history lesson in Year 6 where pupils wrote notes, prior to writing an account of life in Britain in the 1930s. Pupils regularly read for information in many subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This represents a good improvement in Year 2 where considerably more pupils reach standards higher than those expected nationally for pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English have satisfactory support and their achievement is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has contributed significantly to standards rising.
- Lessons are well planned and so the pace of lessons is good.
- Independent work set for pupils is well matched to pupils' differing needs.
- Pupils have few opportunities to try out their own strategies for calculation.
- Challenging targets for pupils and information on how to achieve them are not systematically in place.
- Not enough use is made of ICT.

### **Commentary**

58. The results of the 2002 national tests in Year 2 showed an improvement over the previous two years when the standards attained were well below average. The provisional results for 2003 indicate that standards are average. This improvement is due to the emphasis the school has placed on raising standards in Years 1 and 2. The results of the national tests over the past four years show average standards in Year 6. The unvalidated results for 2003 indicate that standards continue to be average.
59. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are competent in number and algebra and understand the relationship between addition and subtraction. They add and subtract to forty and know the two, five and ten times tables. Teachers challenge more able pupils to achieve competence in



threes, fours and further. They extend number to multiplication and numbers to a hundred and more. Lower attaining pupils are both supported and challenged. All groups of pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in shape, measure and data handling at their own level because teachers plan carefully together and know their pupils well.

60. The development of pupils' skills and understanding is carefully planned by teachers so that by the end of Year 6, most pupils have experienced all the steps in learning to have secure and satisfactory attainment. In Year 6, most understand metric measure for all four properties, time and angle, and can do decimal calculations. Arithmetic work leads to sound skills in fractions and percentages, for example, and to problem solving using these skills. More able pupils move to algebra with unknowns, and in shape to calculation of the external angle of a triangle using its properties. There are few opportunities to apply mathematics to real-life problems or to use computers to enhance learning.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with a significant amount that is good; this enables pupils to make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to produce a stimulating and secure learning environment and pupils respond with good behaviour and are willing learners. They are given sound opportunities to work together and they co-operate well on the tasks set. Pupils show pride and pleasure in their achievements.
62. Generally, oral work is the least effective aspect of the teaching. Teachers' questioning at the start of the daily mathematics lesson does not always provide enough challenge for all the pupils. Not enough opportunities are provided to enable pupils to bounce their ideas and thinking off each other. Questioning is frequently of individuals. Rarely were teachers heard to ask pupils to comment on each other's ideas. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to try out and discuss their own ideas for calculation before they are shown a standard method. The use of mathematical vocabulary is not consistent in Years 3 to 6.
63. Teachers want their pupils to do well, but this aspiration is not harnessed effectively as targets for pupils to aim for, drawn from the information from assessment, have not been established. Pupils' work is marked regularly but it does not consistently give pupils feedback as to what they need to do to improve or targets to aim for.
64. Subject leaders have been effective in raising standards and know what they need to do to improve learning further. They have developed good teamwork between staff. Little training has been provided to develop their leadership and management skills, and no opportunity provided to monitor teaching and thus disseminate the best practice.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. The development of mathematical skills is at an early stage and is a focus for development. Pupils use graphs and charts in other subjects. In science, good use is made of skills, such as creating and analysing tables of data. Mathematical skills are not as well developed in most other subjects.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well because they have the necessary support.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and most reach, or exceed, the expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The curriculum is well organised so that pupils' scientific skills are developed effectively.
- Pupils are keen, behave well and enjoy the practical activities.
- The curriculum is enriched effectively.
- Older pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations.
- Work is not always recorded in a scientific way.
- Marking does not tell pupils how to improve their work.
- There is limited use of ICT.

## Commentary

66. The teacher assessments in 2002 of pupils' work made at the end of Year 2 showed standards to be average. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 show that standards have been average for a number of years. The provisional test results in 2003 show that more pupils reached standards higher than those expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 and that overall standards may well be above average.
67. Pupils achieve well in science because of a well-organised curriculum, with a strong emphasis on practical activities allied with effective teaching. More pupils in Years 2 and 6 are reaching standards higher than those expected for pupils of their ages. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection. The emphasis on practical activities to enhance knowledge and skills was evident in lessons about the properties of materials, insulation of ice-pops and, imaginatively, about Earth and its relation with the sun and moon. There is good enrichment to the curriculum through the environmental studies in the school grounds, visits to museums and by visitors to the school.
68. Pupils are keen to learn about science and to be involved with practical activities. They are interested in their lessons and behave well and make good strides in their learning. In the best teaching, pupils were engaged quickly and questions used effectively to encourage learning. Even on the occasions where the teacher was mainly responsible for carrying out the practical work, pupils made sensible suggestions in response to the teacher's queries. In Year 4, pupils experiment effectively with testing different materials to find out whether they are conductors or insulators. Weaknesses in some lessons were that pupils' own ideas were not sought with enough vigour or pupils were not encouraged to explain the reasons for their ideas and suggestions; as a result, opportunities to extend speaking and listening were missed. Assessment across the school is effective and pupils' progress is tracked well. Marking, however, is not consistent. Some is detailed and helpful, but most does not help pupils understand how they can improve or set future targets.
69. Suitable use is made of pupils' writing skills and there is good use of mathematical skills, such as creating and analysing tables of data. However, the work is not recorded in a scientific way and, particularly, the aspect of prediction is missed. Although pupils develop a good range of skills, not enough opportunities are available for the more able pupils in particular to plan their own scientific investigations. The subject manager monitors the books but as yet does not fully analyse the test results to see how standards may be raised further. Limited use is made of the library and of ICT to enhance learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the aspects of ICT concerned with finding things out and exchanging and sharing information.
- Achievement in developing ideas and making things happen is unsatisfactory and leads to the below average standards as these aspects are not taught in sufficient depth.
- Insufficient resources are available to teach the aspect of control technology effectively.
- Pupils' work is not recorded systematically to enable teachers to assess their progress and help them to improve in their learning.
- Gifted and talented pupils are not identified.
- There has been insufficient progress since the previous inspection.

## Commentary

70. Pupils underachieve for a number of reasons:
- The computers with which the school is satisfactorily resourced are insufficiently used.
  - Teachers' weekly planning does not systematically indicate when ICT is to be used in lessons.
  - A number of teachers are not as confident in the use of ICT and at times provide activities that are not always relevant or at the required level to ensure the pupils' learning.
  - There is too little monitoring of attainment of individual pupils to assist the planning of activities to match their needs.
71. Planning in the medium term does not ensure that all aspects of the subject, particularly developing ideas and making things happen, are covered sufficiently. Standards are also affected by the lack of planning for ICT by teachers in other subjects. Best use is not made of the available computers. Teachers are also hampered by the lack of important resources, especially in enabling pupils to make things happen. A computer is not available in the library for independent research. Opportunities are missed for pupils to check books in and out of the library using ICT. Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged as their attainment is not systematically recorded.
72. The management of pupils is good and teachers explain practical tasks satisfactorily. However, when groups of pupils move to the computer base, teaching assistants are not always sufficiently briefed to help pupils move forward in their learning. A good number of teachers have yet to find the correct balance between allowing the pupils to explore and experiment with the software and intervening at the appropriate moment to take learning further.
73. Pupils in Year 6 have worked with obvious excitement in sharing e-mails with Canadian pen pals. Pupils successfully carry out a survey of the impact on their school of traffic from the nearby main road and use a database program correctly to study their findings. Effective use is made of the Internet to provide a rich source of information enabling pupils to learn more about history and geography. Text and graphics are combined effectively by pupils to make bookmarks and design posters. In Year 2, pupils satisfactorily combine their learning in art about the work of Jackson Pollock with their computer graphic skills to produce images in his style.
74. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in acquiring new computers, but the issues of the curriculum, standards and resources have not yet been fully addressed. Progress has been too slow. The subject manager has useful plans for the future and is creating a good ethos for learning in the subject. She has limited time to monitor the teaching and the learning. The slow progress in developing the use of ICT reflects the lack of clear leadership and management of the curriculum within the leadership team.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Overall, insufficient use is made of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils use wordprocessing extensively to publish their work, for example in English and history, and use PowerPoint to create presentations. Internet research supports work across the curriculum appropriately.

## HUMANITIES

76. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one lesson seen in each subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.
77. In **geography**, a scrutiny of pupils' completed work indicates that the standards attained in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils' achievement, as shown in their completed work, is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has effectively led teachers to establish an integrated scheme that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and it is satisfactorily designed to promote pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. A strength in the curriculum is the emphasis on care for the environment. There are no systematic arrangements for the assessment of pupils' attainment. The enthusiastic management of the subject would be improved if the co-ordinator had more opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, and better training for leadership. No systematic arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of the curriculum.
78. In **history**, the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The curriculum has an appropriate breadth. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed that they had good knowledge and understanding of the historical periods studied, a well-developed sense of chronology and a very positive attitude towards the subject. In the completed work seen there was little evidence of the use of historical evidence being used to investigate the periods being studied. ICT is used mainly for pupils to publish their writing rather than to investigate historical sources or to develop ideas.

## Religious education

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory.
- Effective use is made of religious artefacts.
- Not as much attention is given to learning from religions as is given to learning about religions.
- No arrangements in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress.

### Commentary

79. The standards attained by the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected by the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. At the last inspection, standards in Year 6 were above those expected. In Year 2, systematic use of the Kent Agreed Syllabus has enabled the pupils to satisfactorily understand what something special is. For example, they have a sound understanding of the religious significance of festivals such as Diwali and Christmas. Pupils in Year 6 have a better understanding about religions. They have a sound understanding about aspects of Judaism and the importance of the Torah. Most have a good grasp of the important events in the life of Christ.
80. In the planning of lessons, teachers make effective use of a scheme of work which meets the requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Sound use is made of religious artefacts, which are

treated with respect. In a lesson in Year 3 about Hannukah, the teacher carefully showed pupils the difference between a 'menorah' used in the festival and one used at other times. Effective use is made of video as shown in a lesson where pupils were preparing for a visit to a local Gurdwara. The questioning by the teacher during and after the playing of the video enabled pupils to learn important facts about Sikhism. In the better teaching, good questioning enables pupils to relate what they are learning to their everyday lives. Pupils' completed work shows that the focus of much of the teaching is on learning about religions with fewer opportunities to relate this to pupils' own experiences.

81. The subject co-ordinator is new in post and is enthusiastic. An action plan for improvement has been drawn up and is being implemented satisfactorily. Little time is available for the monitoring role, and teaching has not been monitored. No arrangements are in place to systematically assess pupils' standards and their progress, nor does the development of such arrangements appear in the action plan. This reflects the lack of clarity with the management of the school as to where responsibility lies for this.

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

82. One lesson was seen in art and design and one lesson seen in design and technology. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection. It was not possible to make a judgement on the provision made for these subjects.
83. In **art and design**, the teaching seen was satisfactory. The completed work on display around the school, and in the portfolio kept by the co-ordinator, shows that pupils have access to a wide range of materials. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. Work in three dimensions is under-represented in the completed work seen. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has monitored the provision for art and design during the curriculum release time provided. A good start has been made with the use of digital photography to record and assess pupils' work.
84. In **design and technology**, the evidence drawn from a review of pupils' completed work and of work on display shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those set nationally. Good links are made with other subjects such as history and science. Pupils record the design and valuation elements of their work in diaries. However, these diaries are often incomplete and unmarked, so pupils do not learn how to improve their work. No systematic arrangements are in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress. The use of ICT is limited. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, but has limited time to monitor the teaching and learning.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Overall, standards in music are in line with standards expected nationally. Standards are higher in singing and performing. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory including those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language as they have satisfactory access to the music curriculum.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The initiative to allow class teachers to observe the teaching by the music specialist with a view to having all class teachers confident to teach the subject themselves.
- The good specialist teaching.

## Commentary

85. The music lessons observed were of good quality. They involved singing and playing instruments both pitched and non-pitched. A feature leading to good standards being achieved was the manner in which all pupils responded to challenge. They were active, purposeful and responsive, obviously engaged by stimulating and creative tasks. This was especially so where five groups of pupils were engaged in providing a regular tune on the pentatonic scale to combine with the singing of a popular tune 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot'.
86. The good teaching was undertaken by the co-ordinator with specialist knowledge. A good piece of curriculum innovation is that the school has provided resources so that class teachers stay with their class whilst the specialist teacher teaches it. This arrangement enables class teachers to have a good opportunity to observe effective teaching and so improve their own skills.
87. The subject is satisfactorily resourced with instruments to enable all pupils to experience playing and performing. Pupils have good opportunities to listen to works of both classical and modern composers in hymn practice and assembly time.
88. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, the purchase of an appropriate scheme of work to enable all staff to teach the subject successfully, the emerging use of ICT and pupils' obvious enjoyment and interest all give a picture of a vibrant, developing subject, where standards are improving. Music is a good feature of the school's work.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they have good access to the curriculum and have sound support.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra-curricular activities support pupils' development well.
- Swimming tuition is provided for all pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Systematic arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progression in skills are not in place.

## Commentary

89. It was not possible to see any games or dance lessons. Observation of extra-curricular work, and playground activities, indicates that attainment in games for Years 5 and Year 6 is in line with standards expected nationally. A significant minority of pupils attain high standards. The planning in the recently adopted scheme of work ensures that skills, techniques and tactics of games are taught systematically. Good residential provision at Bowles Centre ensures that the outdoor and adventurous pursuits element of the curriculum is addressed satisfactorily.
90. Teaching is satisfactory overall and a significant proportion is good. Teachers are very aware of the importance of health and safety and ensure that lessons proceed safely. Both teachers and pupils dress appropriately for lessons. High expectations of pupils by teachers, together with challenging activities, ensure pupils' sustained concentration and enthusiasm. Teaching assistants support pupils well. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour produce a sound pace to lessons.

91. Strengths in the teaching lie in good demonstration by the teacher of the skills being learned and the opportunities for pupils to observe and evaluate, so they learn from each other and this consolidates their learning. As a result of the teaching, the pupils increase their confidence in physical control and mobility. Pupils show a good awareness of the function of the heart, the effects of exercise and the importance of warm-up exercise.
92. The swimming sessions are well planned but sometimes noisy. This slows the pace of some lessons. Overall, pupils make sound progress in swimming. Inspection evidence suggests that the standards required by the National Curriculum are being met, but as assessment arrangements are not in place, the school is not able to confirm this.
93. Management of the subject has led to improvements. At present teachers' planning is monitored, but teaching is not. Plans are in place to introduce assessment of pupils' skills but it is not clear where the lead for this will come. Currently there are no records to inform what pupils need to learn or what skills have been acquired. Pupils are not set personal targets in order to be involved in the next steps in learning. Good organisation of the extensive extra-curricular activities and additional coaching sessions contribute very effectively to the subject. A planned initiative with a nearby university college will add to the school's provision.

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

94. Two lessons were seen, both in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Due attention is given to the provision of sex education and to the dangers of the misuse of drugs. The teaching in the lessons seen was never less than satisfactory and in one instance was very good. In this lesson about friendship and loneliness, good relationships between the teacher and pupils enabled the pupils to share their emotions and feelings, carefully listen and appreciate each other's experiences. In another lesson, in which pupils were discussing prejudice, a frank and animated discussion about bullying enabled a pupil to raise issues that were dealt with effectively by the class teacher.
95. The provision made in this area contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

## 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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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



