

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMES VIEW INFANT SCHOOL

RAINHAM, KENT

LEA area : 887

Unique Reference Number : 118528

Inspection Number: 186240

Headteacher : Ms. P. J. Heffernan

Reporting inspector : Mrs P. King - 7853

Dates of inspection : 8th November – 11th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707488

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant School
Type of control :	Community
Age range of pupils :	4 - 7
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Bloors Lane, Rainham, Kent ME8 7DX
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Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr Trevor Croucher
Date of previous inspection :	27-29 November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs P. King	English; Art; Special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management; The efficiency of the school.
Mr P. Widdowson		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Mrs M. Archer	Mathematics; Design and technology; History; Music; Religious education.	Equal opportunities Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Staffing accommodation and learning resources;
Mrs G. Robertson	Science; Information technology; Geography; Physical education. Under-fives	Curriculum and assessment English as an additional language

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The school promotes a high level of care and concern for pupils' welfare.

The involvement of parents in their children's learning is very good.

Links with pre-school groups are very good and the under-fives and their parents have a very good introduction to the school.

Procedures for assessment are very good for the under-fives and good in Key Stage 1.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

The school promotes pupils' moral development well.

Very good procedures are in place for financial control and school administration.

Learning resources in information technology are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

Curriculum leadership is not strong enough and the management of school development is not co-ordinated sufficiently.

Teachers do not share their expertise and planning of pupils' work sufficiently in Year 1 to ensure that they build consistently across the year group on pupils' past learning experiences.

There is a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1 which limits the progress that pupils make in some aspects of subjects.

Pupils are not offered enough opportunities for extended work or for independent learning.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of the pupils at the school

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress overall in meeting the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. Curriculum management continues to be in need of development but satisfactory progress has been made. The provision for art, geography, history and information technology has improved and the curriculum is now well balanced. Whole-school policies are in place for all subjects but they are still not implemented consistently. Teachers are not yet building consistently on pupils' learning across Year 1 because of variations in the teaching approaches. The school has improved the use of time but the pace of some lessons is too slow. The school development plan has been reviewed and contains costs and some priorities for action. Some good strategies have been used to monitor and evaluate the curriculum but they are not yet co-ordinated fully to have the maximum impact on classroom practice. The governors' annual report for parents and the marking of attendance registers now meet statutory requirements. All safety issues have been addressed. The school has set challenging targets for raising attainment in writing and reading and information technology in 1999 and has sufficient staff expertise and enthusiasm to address the required school improvements.

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		
Reading	C	C	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
Writing	C	C	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
Mathematics	B	B	<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

In the national tests in 1995 at the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards dropped in the national tests in all these subjects from the time of the last inspection until 1998. In 1998 pupils' attainment was close to the national average in reading and mathematics and was below in writing. In teachers' assessments pupils' attainment in science was average. Standards improved in the national tests in 1999 and pupils' attainment when compared with all schools and with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds was average in reading and writing and just above average in mathematics. In the teachers' assessment in science attainment was average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds the school's results were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The school's success in raising standards in 1999 in Year 2 in writing and mathematics was due to the challenging targets set for the pupils within the year group.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is just below what is expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in the school and reach standards by the end of the key stage that are mainly in line with what is expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment currently in Year 2 is not significantly different from that reached in the most recent national tests. In information technology and religious education pupils' attainment is mainly in line with what is expected nationally for their age. In all other subjects pupils make satisfactory progress except in music in which they make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Satisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. In just under nine out of ten lessons the quality of

teaching is of satisfactory or higher quality. In about four out of ten lessons it is good, and a small amount of teaching is very good and excellent. There is a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour is good in class and around the school. Pupils show respect for each other and the environment.
Attendance	Attendance is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection.
Ethos*	Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They listen very well, concentrate on their work and take a pride in their achievements. Relationships are good. The school is committed to raising standards and was successful in doing so in the end of key stage national tests in 1999.
Leadership and management	Members of the recently reconstituted governing body are very supportive of the school. They have put in place procedures to ensure that they carry out their responsibilities effectively. The leadership of the school is good in respect of promoting a secure environment for learning and very good relationships with parents. Curriculum leadership is not strong enough to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school.
Curriculum	The school provides a good quality curriculum for the under-fives and a satisfactory curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1. However, teachers do not always build consistently on pupils' learning across year groups because they do not all have the same expectations of what pupils are to achieve. Assessment procedures are good and are used when planning the curriculum and in meeting pupils' individual learning needs.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and is managed effectively. These pupils' progress is often good, particularly in literacy and numeracy because of the quality of adult support that is given.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school promotes pupils' moral development well and their spiritual, social and cultural development satisfactorily. All members of staff are very effective in encouraging pupils to co-operate and to value the views and beliefs of others. The emphasis that they place on pupils showing initiative and independence varies across the classes so that on occasions pupils are too teacher-dependent in their learning.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The allocation of teaching staff is generous and all members are suitably qualified and experienced. Sufficient expertise is available overall to provide a good quality curriculum for the under-fives and to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. A high level of well-trained classroom assistants ensures that pupils are well supported, particularly the under-fives and pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation provides an attractive and spacious environment for learning. Learning resources are mainly satisfactory, with some that are good or very good.
Value for money	Taking account of above average school costs, satisfactory pupil progress overall, the satisfactory quality education provided and good pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- . Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- . Teachers are approachable;
- . The school handles complaints well;
- . Parents are well informed about the progress that their children make and about what is taught;
- . Pupils achieve a good standard of work;
- . A homework policy is shared with parents;
- . Pupils are encouraged to show respect for each other and to take responsibility;
- . Pupils' behaviour is good;
- . Pupils enjoy school.

What some parents are not happy about

- . There is insufficient information about what is taught and how the pupils are progressing with their work.
- pupils have too few activities at lunch times and after school.
- school policy for clothing for physical education is not followed consistently within all classes;

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views of the majority of parents in most respects. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good. Members of staff are available to talk informally to parents about any concerns which they may have and parents feel welcome in the school. The information that the school provides for parents about what is taught and their children's progress is good. Most pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected nationally for their age but the attainment of some pupils is good. Teachers make good use of homework to support the work of the classroom. Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic learners. The school promotes good relationships and gives pupils some opportunities to take responsibilities around the school and in the classroom. Only one formally organised activity takes place out of class time, which is the recently established computer club. However, teachers often continue to work with individual pupils or groups of pupils at lunchtimes. The pupils do not dress consistently for physical education and on some occasions do not change their clothes sufficiently.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the satisfactory progress made since the last inspection the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- **improve curriculum management by ensuring that:**

- regular monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior management team is planned and undertaken to check that procedures and agreed approaches to teaching and learning are followed consistently; (70,72,115)
- staff professional development is more closely linked to outcomes of monitoring and evaluation and school priorities for improvement; (72,79,115)
- a programme of induction is implemented fully for all new staff; (79)

- **improve the quality of teaching in Year 1, make the quality of teaching more consistently good across the school and raise pupils' attainment by:**

- establishing regular procedures for teachers in Year 1 to share their expertise and approaches to teaching and learning whilst planning lessons; (20,47,115,144,154)
- improving the pace of some lessons; (25,38,123)
- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are to achieve in order that they provide more challenge for pupils in speaking, aspects of reading and writing and mathematics, particularly for the higher attaining pupils; (9,20,34,35,45,102,105,106,108,112,113,121,124, 132,134,147)
- improving the opportunities that pupils have for independent learning, particularly in science and information technology; (11,12,36,38,129,135)
- making fuller use of classroom assistants, particularly during introduction to lessons throughout the school and also in lesson planning for the under-fives.(84)

- **improve the management of school development by ensuring that:**

- staff and governors are involved in the annual review of the school development plan; (76)
- the school development plan has clear targets, intended outcomes and strategies for monitoring which are used in regular school self-evaluation. (76)

In addition to the key issues the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- to make reference books more readily available to pupils in classrooms on a regular basis; (82,117,145,155)
- to ensure that all pupils change appropriately for physical activities. (175)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1.Thames View is of average size for an infant school. It takes pupils from a wide area of mixed owner-occupied and rented accommodation. There are 151 pupils on roll, which comprises 71 boys and 80 girls. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, with the vast majority of pupils being of European origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, which is below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average. At the time of the inspection one member of the teaching staff was on maternity leave and a temporary teacher was replacing her.

2.In line with the Medway Education Authority's policy children are admitted to the school in September, if they are five before February of the following year. Children whose birthday falls in January or February attend only on a part-time basis for the Autumn Term. Children whose birthday falls between March and August are admitted in January. For the first half-term they attend on a part-time basis. There are no admissions in the summer term. Children who are under five are placed in two reception classes. At the time of the inspection there were 23 full-time and 12 part-time pupils, making a total of 20 boys and 15 girls.

3.The school aims to promote the development of pupils' language, mathematical, creative and physical skills and their awareness of the world in which they live, to foster lively and enquiring minds, self-confidence and striving for personal excellence and pupils' moral and spiritual development.

4.The school's priorities for 1999 to the year 2000 are to improve pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school, to raise boys' attainment in reading and improve the use of information technology. Challenging targets have been set for reading, writing and mathematics for the end of the key stage in the year 2000 in order to raise attainment.

Key Indicators

5. Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999 (98)	51 (38)	31 (41)	82 (79)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils	Boys	38 (26)	40 (26)	47 (33)
at NC Level 2 or	Girls	30 (33)	31 (32)	31 (34)
above	Total	68 (59)	71 (58)	78 (67)
Percentage at NC	School	83 (76)	87 (74)	95 (86)
Level 2 or above	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	38 (27)	42 (33)	43 (31)
at NC Level 2 or	Girls	31 (33)	30 (34)	31 (33)
above	Total	69 (60)	72 (67)	74 (64)
Percentage at NC	School	84 (77)	88 (86)	90 (82)
Level 2 or above	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year	Authorised	School	0.2
	Absence	National comparative data	4.6
	Unauthorised	School	5.7
	Absence	National comparative data	0.2
			0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :		%
	Very good or better	5.17
	Satisfactory or better	89.66
	Less than satisfactory	10.34

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the reception classes is just below what is expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and by the age of five reach the levels expected for their age when measured against national expectations as set out in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development,

2. Attainment overall in the school when taking account of all subjects is mainly in line with what is expected for the pupils' age. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection in 1995.

3. In the national tests in 1995 at the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards dropped in the national tests in all these subjects from the time of the last inspection until 1998. In 1998 pupils' attainment was close to the national average in reading and mathematics and was below in writing. In teachers' assessments pupils' attainment in science was average. Standards improved in the national tests in 1999 and pupils' attainment when compared with all schools and with similar schools was average in reading and writing and just above average in mathematics. In the teachers' assessment in science attainment was average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds the school's results were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The school's success in raising standards in 1999 in Year 2 in writing and mathematics was due to the challenging targets set for the pupils within the year group. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school is committed to raising standards in the Year 2000 and has set challenging targets when matched against what the pupils are achieving at this stage in the year. In this year group however, there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in 1999.

4. Boys' attainment from 1996 to 1998 had been higher than that of girls in mathematics and writing but lower in reading. The school was aware of these gender differences and targeted improving boys' attainment in reading. Despite this focus the girls' performance was higher than that of the boys in all subjects in 1999.

5. At the end of the key stage pupils' attainment in listening is above national expectations and in line with what is expected for their age in speaking. Pupils are very attentive listeners but they make insufficient progress with explaining their ideas or what they have been doing because they have too few opportunities for talking for a range of different purposes. Pupils' attainment in reading is average for their age. They make satisfactory progress and read simple texts with appropriate accuracy, fluency and understanding. However, pupils do not have sufficient awareness of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and few pupils are able to state reading preferences. Progress is limited in these aspects of reading because of some inconsistencies in the approach to teaching the required skills and by the lack of reference books displayed in some classrooms. Pupils' attainment in writing is average. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and this supports their work in other subjects, such as science, geography and religious education. They make satisfactory progress in becoming independent writers, although

the lower attaining pupils are very dependent on adult support. Their use of punctuation and their handwriting are satisfactory. They give appropriate attention to spelling and make good use of their phonic knowledge when writing independently. Whilst they are able to write some common words correctly, this skill is not as well developed. There is some lack of challenge for the higher attainers in Year 1 in writing because teachers' expectations are not always high enough.

6. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound; their ability to calculate mentally and to recall number facts is satisfactory. They are able to approach calculations in different ways and explain their methods clearly. Pupils use mathematical terms correctly. They are able to apply their thinking from one aspect of their learning to another. For example, pupils use co-ordinates successfully in geography and use their mathematical skills to record their findings in tabular form in science. Progress is satisfactory across the school.

7. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in science and their attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. Pupils develop satisfactory technical vocabulary and scientific language and are able to describe with accuracy their findings orally and in writing. They are able to observe carefully and to describe what they see with increasing awareness of detail as they move through the school. Their subject knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. For example, pupils understand that light sources are natural and man-made. Pupils' ability in experimental and investigative work is good, particularly when the teachers or learning support assistants do not over direct them in their work.

8. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations by Year 2. Pupils use information technology with increasing confidence as they move through the key stage. Regular and frequent access to computers enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in developing their skills. They are able to use the word processor to write a first draft of their work or to type their previously written records of science investigations for example. They are able to use data handling programs in mathematics to create graphs and to extract information from a CD ROM. They are able to use control programs to make a programmable robot follow a given course. Progress is satisfactory but the work is often too adult-directed to ensure that pupils know what technology will do for them.

9. In religious education pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by Year 2. Pupils have appropriate knowledge of Bible stories and the major festivals of Christianity. They know about some of the special places, clothes and food of Hinduism and that the Koran is a special book for Muslims. Pupils learn to respect the beliefs of others and to consider concepts such as forgiveness. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress.

10. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and this is clearly evident in colour mixing. Pupils are able to paint and draw satisfactorily from observation and their imagination using pastels, and print using collected items. Some pupils have produced good work in painting in the style of Monet. However, there is no clear programme of work to help teachers in developing skills systematically across the school. As a result, pupils sometimes have experience of techniques at a similar level across the school and this limits their progress.

11. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in design and technology. They have a satisfactory understanding of the designing and making processes and are beginning to evaluate their work. They are able to use an appropriate range of tools and materials and are beginning to

appreciate the properties and possibilities of these materials.

12. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning geographical skills. They develop satisfactory enquiry skills, for example when planning and recalling directions on an imaginary route. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of environmental issues, such as when recognising the benefits of having more rubbish bins. They develop an awareness of the world beyond their locality that is appropriate for their age.

13. Pupils' progress in history is satisfactory and their attainment is in line with what is expected for their age. They develop an appropriate sense of chronology and can use common words in relation to the passage of time. They are beginning to recognise differences in people's lives over time by comparing life in Victorian times with that of today. In the study of the Gunpowder Plot pupils are able to consider the reasons for and consequences of people's actions. They are willing to ask and answer questions about the past.

14. Pupils make good progress in music and their attainment in composing and performing is often good for their age. They listen attentively to recorded music and are able to sing with appropriate awareness of rhythm and pitch. By Year 2 pupils are able to compose music in parts, using their voices and clapping and tapping their knees. They can also compose using untuned instruments and record their composition in symbols. They are able to put their compositions together and perform as a group. A high number of pupils who choose to learn to play the recorder make rapid progress and is able to perform in a large group.

15. Pupils' attainment and progress in physical education are satisfactory. Pupils develop good body control when completing a sequence of movements in dance. They have satisfactory skills in games and can sustain a good level of energetic exercise. They become increasingly aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies.

16. Progress in lessons seen was most often satisfactory across the school, with progress being mainly good in Year 2, with some unsatisfactory progress in Year 1. The variability in progress across Years 1 and 2 is mainly due to differences in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able. Progress is also limited by some differences in teaching approaches across the school, for example in reading. Sometimes teachers over-direct pupils in their work so that they do not have opportunities to develop the ability to enquire and explore. Progress is more often good where there is a clear scheme of work that gives teachers guidance on how to build on pupils' skills across the school. However, good progress is linked closely in Year 2 to teachers having an agreed commitment to providing all pupils in the year group with similar learning experiences so that they plan work together on a regular basis. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress generally. This is due to the high level of adult support that they receive and to work that is often matched to the targets in their individual education plans. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is similar to that of the other pupils.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

17. The school has been successful in maintaining good pupil responses to learning since the last inspection and this is valued by parents.

18. Children who are under five have good attitudes to learning and enjoy the activities available.

They are able to take turns and play and learn in a caring and sharing atmosphere. Their behaviour is good and they listen carefully to adults. They are able to choose from a range of activities and concentrate appropriately for their age.

19. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have positive attitudes to learning, their behaviour is good and their personal development is satisfactory. They are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy coming to school.

20. Pupils with special educational needs respond positively to the high level of adult support that they are given. They are keen to do well.

21. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. In the majority of lessons pupils listen attentively and show interest in their work. Sustained concentration, particularly in the literacy and numeracy hours, has a positive impact on attainment and progress in most lessons. However, on some occasions when the pupils are not clear how much work they are expected to achieve in the time available, they do not apply themselves as conscientiously. Most pupils are proud of their achievements in lessons and present their work carefully.

22. Behaviour throughout the school is good and has a positive effect on the standards of achievement and the quality of life in the school. There have been no exclusions in the last three years. In the classroom, pupils listen to instructions and respond quickly to teachers. They work well in pairs and small groups and share resources and take turns. In the playground, pupils are boisterous and excited but play well together and there is no evidence of isolation, harassment or bullying. Lunchtime is a social occasion where pupils are polite and well mannered. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and open doors for other pupils and visitors. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes good behaviour and the benefits this brings to establishing an orderly community.

23. Pupils have respect for each other and the staff. This is demonstrated in the way that they listen to each other in class and show appreciation of each other's achievements. It is evident in their fund-raising for charity and in their support for a girl called Seselia in Malawi by weekly donations. Pupils also show respect for the traditions and beliefs of others when they are different from their own, particularly in religious education.

24. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but not extensive enough. Pupils are able to take some responsibility in the life of the school. They take registers from the classroom to the office after registration and enjoy acting as monitors in the classroom. In lessons pupils are able to cooperate with each other when working. They show initiative when required to do so, such as when they were working in groups to discuss artefacts in history with one pupil acting as a group leader. However, they are not developing their independent learning skills enough because they have too few opportunities to take initiative and make choices and decisions in their work.

Attendance

25. Attendance at the school is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a low rate of unauthorised and authorised absence and most pupils come to school on time. Lessons throughout the day start punctually. Good attendance and punctuality ensure that maximum coverage is given to the curriculum and have a positive impact on attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

26.The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory, with approximately four out of ten being of higher quality and approximately one in ten being unsatisfactory.

27.The quality of teaching of the under-fives is never less than satisfactory, with some teaching that is good. It is supported by a well-planned programme, which ensures that an appropriate curriculum is provided to meet the needs of the age group. Teachers know their pupils well. The two teachers work co-operatively in planning what is to be taught but the class assistants play little part in the planning processes. However, all adults work well together, although in some parts of lessons support staff are not used fully. Assessment through observation, discussion and task is good and the class assistants are fully involved in this process. Teachers are clear what pupils are to gain from activities but do not always focus sufficiently on the children's individual needs when planning and expectations are not high enough on all occasions.

28.In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is of satisfactory or higher quality in just under 9 out of 10 lessons in approximately four out of ten lessons it is satisfactory and a small amount of teaching is very good or excellent. In Year 1 teaching is mainly satisfactory with some that is good and a significant amount that is unsatisfactory. In Year 2 teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is mainly good. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory with much that is good and some that is unsatisfactory. Teaching in science, information technology and religious education is satisfactory. In all other subjects it is satisfactory overall, with much good teaching in music and some unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons seen in art, design and technology and physical education.

29.Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge overall. They often use subject specific language appropriately in subjects like English, mathematics and science.

30.Teachers plan lessons thoroughly although they are not always clear what pupils are to gain from lessons in terms of knowledge and understanding, particularly in some writing, guided reading and art lessons. When there are shortcomings in teachers' planning in this respect, the focus is on activity completion rather than the development of specific skills. This sometimes leads to pupils losing concentration because the work is not purposeful enough and they are not certain what they have to achieve. Teachers often prepare separate work for the different ability groups and in the best teaching provide extension activities for the higher attaining pupils. In lessons where the match of work to pupils' needs is not close enough the level of adult support ensures that pupils are able to complete the task but there is a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

31.Teachers organise pupils well and there is a smooth transition from whole-class to group work.

32.The literacy hour is implemented fully with appropriate emphasis being given to whole-class and group activities and to the plenary session. There is some variability in the methods employed to teach guided reading. In the best approaches teachers use the time very effectively to interact with the pupils within a group to teach a range of reading skills. However, on occasions the time is not used for the maximum benefit as the focus is on teaching individual pupils and some pupils are

not sufficiently involved. In mathematics teachers plan satisfactorily for the oral part of lesson but find difficulty in organising appropriate group tasks.

33. In most lessons teachers question pupils very well, directing questions at individual pupils to promote their involvement or extend their thinking. For example there is some good questioning and reflection in religious education. Some teachers do not give pupils enough time to respond and are satisfied with answers that are too brief. In most subjects teachers focus on the teaching of skills but do not often allow pupils to explore the materials and equipment, to plan and develop as independent learners. In design and technology pupils have the opportunity to choose materials and evaluate their designs but this is not as evident in art. In physical education time is given for pupils to practise but not to explore their own ideas and evaluate their movements and those of others. In some classes pupils are given opportunities to collaborate and explore sounds in music and to ask and answer questions in history. Some work in science is too teacher-directed to enable pupils to develop investigative approaches.

34. Teachers manage pupils well through the good relationships that they establish with them, the use of positive encouragement and through a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. They provide a secure environment for learning.

35. Teachers use resources satisfactorily overall. They make available those that pupils need in lessons but do not often offer scope for choice. They select appropriate texts to motivate pupils in literacy. They make good use of information technology resources to support work across the curriculum and of classroom assistants but this can sometimes result in a lack of pupil independence. Teachers start lessons on time and organise pupils effectively so that time is not wasted. However, the pace of teaching is a weakness in some lessons when explanations are over-precise and reflect expectations that are too low in terms of what pupils can achieve independently.

36. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory with some strong features. Teachers often note individual pupils' progress at the end of lessons and use this to plan future work for pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They mark pupils' work regularly and positively. Some teachers write comments to give pupils guidance in how to improve their work. Teachers set precise individual targets for pupils and display these in their writing books. Some teachers refer to these when checking work with pupils but this is not a consistent approach. Most teachers are very skilful in questioning pupils to build on their responses as the lessons progress. They often match their questions to the needs of the pupils and use their assessments of their responses to take the lesson forward appropriately.

37. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. There is a clear focus on skills to be developed in individual and group work within the class, which is often matched closely to targets in the pupils' individual education plans. Some teachers make frequent references to these targets when teaching the whole class, particularly when they involve use of praise to modify behaviour or when directing questions at pupils to ensure that they understand what is taught. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants so that they know what pupils are to gain from the activities and can give them appropriate support. Some teachers make very skilful use of learning support assistants in the whole-class introduction to lessons so that they work alongside pupils to ensure that they participate. However, they are not all used effectively at this time.

38. Teachers make good use of homework. Pupils have reading, spelling and mathematics regularly and on some occasions when appropriate to class activities additional literacy tasks or topic work. Teachers make regular comments in the home/school contact book and value work that pupils complete out of school.

39. Since the last inspection some shortcomings in art teaching have been addressed and the quality is now at least satisfactory. The lack of pace and the undemanding nature of some tasks are still weaknesses in some teaching. Approaches to marking have been improved.

The curriculum and assessment

40. A sound, well-balanced curriculum is provided for children under five. It is based on the desirable outcomes for the areas of learning and enables children to experience play, talk and physical and intellectual activities. It provides a satisfactory introduction to the National Curriculum.

41. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is broad, balanced and promotes pupil's intellectual, physical and personal development satisfactorily. It is accessible to all pupils and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.

42. Satisfactory progress has been made since last inspection and the school now gives appropriate time to the National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education. Art, geography, history and information technology are now planned for effectively. Policies and schemes of work are in place but they do not always ensure that teachers build on pupils' learning consistently. This is because they do not identify clearly the skills and knowledge to be taught and when they are to be covered, for example in art and geography. There is insufficient guidance on what standards teachers should expect pupils to achieve.

43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers' planning takes these pupils' needs into account and meets the targets set out in their individual education plans. There are very few instances of withdrawal from class activities for individual or small group support. When pupils are withdrawn it is for specific speech and language needs and teachers ensure that these activities occur at different times so that pupils do not miss the same lessons each week.

44. Teachers plan pupils' work well and subjects are taught separately or if appropriate links are made between subjects through areas of study such as "Light". The school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily for planning these subjects. Members of the teaching staff undertake the long-term planning together and this ensures that all co-ordinators are involved at this crucial stage. The weekly and daily plans for the reception classes and Year 2 are prepared by both teachers and this means that they share their expertise and pupils in both classes in the year group have a consistent curriculum. In Year 1 weekly and daily plans are prepared separately and there are some inconsistencies in the provision for these pupils.

45. The curriculum is extended, supported and enriched by the first-hand experiences provided by visitors to the school, such as the retired school teacher who talked to the children about schools fifty years ago, visits into the locality, for example Bloor Farm, or visits further afield to see the

Cutty Sark in Greenwich. The school has only one extra-curricular club; the newly set up computer club run by teachers and support staff.

46.The school has maintained the good standard of assessment evident in the last inspection. Across the whole school assessment is good. There are very good procedures for assessing children in the reception classes. The school assesses children on entry in line with requirements. Teachers use the baseline assessment to ensure that children are given a sound start and that the early identification of special educational needs is undertaken. Assessments are carried out daily through observations of children as they work and teachers record their findings in an informative and sensitive way.

47.The procedure for assessment in Year 1 and Year 2 is good. Teachers keep informative records but occasionally these are too brief in diagnostic detail to be useful in informing planning. Teachers work hard and conscientiously with the assessments that they make every half term. Examples of pupils' assessed work in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology are assessed thoroughly and kept in individual folders. These samples of work provide an overview of pupils' attainment and are used to assist teachers in setting targets for pupils at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics. This practice is not yet consistently in place in Year 1.

48.Assessment of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. The learning support assistants make a regular contribution by recording their observations of pupils' achievements at the end of an activity.

49.The school analyses the information gained from national testing at the end of the key stage very effectively. As a result of the careful analysis of the English results in 1998 the school has purchased an additional set of reading books and introduced an extended writing session each week in order to raise standards in reading and writing. These initiatives have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment in the national tests in 1999.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50.The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily overall. There is an established ethos based on mutual trust and respect in which the active involvement of both parents and the wider community is promoted and fostered.

51.The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spiritual development are provided in the daily act of collective worship and in other areas of the curriculum. Insight into Christian values and traditions is reinforced through daily assemblies. These are well planned and offer opportunities for quiet reflection, such as when a candle was lit and pupils were encouraged to look at the candle flame while they thought quietly about something important to them. Pupils were seen to think quietly about forgiveness and about how by being thoughtful and by complimenting others they can give them a feeling of self-worth. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. In a music lesson pupils worked in groups to compose music for firework night. This was a thoughtful exercise, taken very seriously, which fostered a feeling of quiet pleasure among the group as a result. Music is also played as pupils enter and leave the hall at assembly times, when they are encouraged to listen carefully and to reflect upon what they hear.

52.The school promotes pupils' moral development well. A clear policy for behaviour is supported by the whole school community and provides a sound foundation for pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are aware of the school rules and understand the reasons for having them. There are shared expectations for good behaviour throughout the school, and both teaching and support staff treat pupils with respect and are shown respect in return.

53.Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Pupils are given some opportunities to undertake responsibilities in their classes and around the school, such as making sure that outer doors are secure after break times and taking messages around the building. In one class pupils have a buddy, a special friend to whom they can talk or look for support or sympathy and this works very well. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is fostered by their work for a wide range of charities. The school continues to support Seselia in Malawi and takes part in Red Nose day, Children in Need and other specific appeals. Pupils entertain their parents at a Christmas and an Easter concert when all pupils participate. All members of staff promote very effectively pupils' awareness of the need to share, co-operate and value each other's contributions and this is a strong feature of the provision for pupils' social development. The approach to developing pupils' independence in learning is less consistent across the school and is a weakness in the school's provision for pupils' social and personal development.

54.The provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. Pupils are made aware of their own cultural traditions through the celebration of Christian festivals and through dance and music. Visitors, such as a granny, who came to talk about her life when a child, and the Kent music school which visited last year enhance the pupils' understanding. Projects on the Gunpowder plot, the use of stories of St. George and other historical or mythical figures and visits by every class to a place of interest each year make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils are made aware of other cultural traditions through a celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, in tasting food, seeing and trying different clothing and by listening to music. Displays of books and artefacts support this understanding.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

55.The school has been successful since the last inspection in maintaining the good support and guidance offered to pupils. It provides a caring and supportive environment which encourages positive attitudes towards learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and teachers are always accessible and responsive to their needs. Pupils are very willing to discuss any personal problems or concerns with staff. Both formal and informal procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are good.

56.Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and there are good links with outside agencies such as a member of Local Education Authority Individual Pupil Services helps teachers to prepare individual education plans for these pupils. Pupils' progress is monitored each term and formal annual reviews are held for pupils with statements of special educational need. Parents with children who have special educational needs are involved in discussion of their children's progress and value the support that these pupils receive.

57. Attendance registers are marked consistently and accurately and there has been a significant improvement in the recording and monitoring of attendance. The chair of governors, the headteacher and the school administrator are all involved in the monitoring process and attendance figures are submitted to the governing body every term. There is good liaison with the educational welfare officer and effective procedures are in place for following up any unexplained absence or persistent lateness. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are now good.

58. The school has an effective behaviour and discipline policy and the school's Golden Rules are well publicised and known by pupils. Rewards and sanctions are applied consistently throughout the school and are a positive encouragement for good behaviour and work. Lunchtime supervision is of a high standard and the members of the support staff are extremely effective in caring for and supporting pupils.

59. The school has a detailed child protection policy with a named child protection officer, and there are clear guidelines to staff on how to identify pupils who may be at risk. Parents feel the policy is very effective. The school anti-bullying policy is contained within the behaviour and discipline policy and any reported incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Bullying is not perceived as an issue at the school by pupils, parents or staff.

60. The school has a personal, social and health education policy with aims and objectives but there is no scheme of work or planned programme within the curriculum. The school has made the decision not to teach sex education formally and this is explained in the governors' policy statement in the prospectus.

61. The school provides a safe environment for all staff and pupils. There are clear guidelines for recording and dealing with accidents. A detailed and comprehensive health and safety policy has recently been revised and is awaiting ratification by the governing body. There are regular risk assessment inspections carried out by the health and safety governor accompanied by the headteacher and the staff health and safety representative. All health and safety issues raised during the last inspection have been addressed, although the school has been made aware of a small number of minor issues that were identified during this inspection.

62. There are good links with the two main feeder playgroups which ensure a smooth transition into the reception classes. Pupils visit the school for story time and to meet their teachers. Teachers build up effective relationships with the children and give them a positive start to their education. There are good procedures for transfer to the junior school, which include meetings between teachers. Year 2 pupils spend time in the junior school classroom and playground and attend an assembly. Liaison for children with special educational needs is good.

Partnership with parents and the community

63. The school has an effective partnership with parents which has a significant impact on the quality of education provided. Parents receive good information through the school prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents and regular newsletters. A useful brochure for parents provides them with information on how they can prepare their children for school. Pupils' annual reports written in the summer term give information on attainment and progress and areas for development. Parents find the reports informative and useful.

64. There are two formal consultation evenings for parents, which include an opportunity to discuss pupils' annual reports. The school also organises information evenings which have been used to explain to parents the introduction of the numeracy and literacy hours. These have been very successful and valued by parents. Staff are always available to talk informally to parents about any concerns they may have and parents are always made to feel very welcome in school.

65. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school and they appreciate having this opportunity. About thirty parents help regularly in school. They provide support in the classrooms by hearing pupils read and by working with pupils in information technology, art and craft activities and cooking. Parents regularly attend concerts and assemblies held at the school. Many parents help at home with reading and other tasks given as homework. There is an active parent teacher association that serves both the infant and junior Schools. They organise regular social and fund raising activities that raise over £3,000 annually for the two schools. Money raised for the infant school has been used mainly to buy new computers and this has improved the quality of education provided significantly, particularly in information technology.

66. The school has established satisfactory links with the community although business links continue to be under-developed. Pupils support a wide range of local, national and international charities and at the Harvest Festival whilst some food is sold to raise money for charity, some is distributed to local elderly residents who have been chosen by the pupils. Visitors into school include members of some of the charities supported by the school who talk to pupils about their work and the local police officer who talks about the role of the police and personal safety. These activities make pupils very aware of others less fortunate than themselves and develop their social awareness. The governing body is endeavouring to improve links with local businesses to support pupils in their studies of the local community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

67. The leadership of the school is sound overall and good in some respects. A strong feature of the leadership, which was identified in the last inspection report, is the impact that it has on the school's ethos. In respect of pupils' behaviour and welfare, policies are implemented consistently and all members of staff contribute to providing a secure environment for pupils in which relationships are good and pupils are keen to learn. Very good relationships are maintained with parents. Curriculum leadership and management have improved satisfactorily since the last inspection but are not yet firm enough to ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to procedures.

The systems that have been put in place to ensure the consistent implementation of whole-school curriculum policies are not yet effective enough. As a result there are variations across the school in the approaches to teaching so that pupils do not always build on their skills fully from year to year. The administrative procedures ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis

68. Members of the recently reconstituted governing body are very supportive of the school. They have put into place procedures to ensure that they are suitably informed about the life and work of the school and able to carry out their specific responsibilities effectively. For example, the new terms of reference include responsibility for ensuring National Curriculum coverage and to achieve this all governors have specific subject responsibilities and all National Curriculum subjects are

included.

69. Members of the teaching staff are assigned leadership roles appropriately, for which they have recently revised job descriptions. However, the headteacher's job description has not been reviewed for a number of years and those teachers with temporary responsibilities for subject leadership in view of the long-term staff absence have not been given sufficient written guidance. Regular staff meetings are held in which decisions made are recorded so that all members of the teaching staff are aware of what the school's expectations are in terms of curriculum developments. The headteacher has monitored teachers' curriculum planning regularly this term and although this is variable in quality there is evidence of some improvement in response to written advice. Curriculum co-ordinators and the headteacher have monitored teaching and learning in a number of subjects during the last year and have provided evaluative reports for the staff and governors. These have been very useful in identifying areas for development and in helping teachers to improve some aspects of their teaching. However, the links between these observations and staff professional development are not clear enough and monitoring of specific areas in need of improvement is not sufficiently regular to ensure that all teachers implement the necessary changes consistently.

70. The headteacher and the co-ordinator provide satisfactory management of the provision for the under-fives. There is a high level of support for the teachers and good liaison between all adults leads to effective planning for and assessment of pupils' progress.

71. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator provides guidance and support for the teaching assistants through appraisal, responds to their needs for training and ensures that regular reviews of pupils' progress are organised in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not taken place because the co-ordinator has very little release time from a full-time class teaching commitment.

72. The school has comprehensive aims that influence the work of the school, particularly in respect of emphasising the importance of literacy, numeracy and physical education and promoting pupils' spiritual and moral values. Those relating to pupils' ability to enquire and question do not impact on teaching and learning consistently. Members of staff and the governing body are involved in the preparation of a suitably comprehensive range of policies for the curriculum and other important areas such as behaviour and equal opportunities, most of which have been reviewed in the last three years. However, some subject guidance is not detailed enough to provide support to teachers in curriculum planning.

73. The school development plan has been reviewed since the last inspection and now contains costs and some priorities for action. It was initially prepared in 1998 in consultation with staff, governors and parents. The headteacher has subsequently reviewed the plan annually without discussion with staff. The co-ordinators often have specific priorities for their subject development based on monitoring and evaluation of classroom observations. However, these are not always reflected in their annual action plans which are based on the school development plan. Also they are often insufficiently clear when planning to meet the school development priorities about the differences between intended outcomes, actions and monitoring to ensure that curriculum development is systematically planned for and evaluated. The headteacher does not hold regular

meetings with the co-ordinators to discuss progress against the action plans. There have been some good developments in monitoring and action planning since the last inspection but the management of them is not co-ordinated sufficiently to ensure the maximum impact on classroom practice.

74.The school has made satisfactory progress in managing the required improvements in the last inspection report. Good progress has been made in ensuring that the National Curriculum is implemented fully although some whole school policies are still not carried out consistently. The school now meets all statutory requirements and particularly those in relation to marking attendance registers and reporting assessment information in the governors' annual report to parents. Insufficient progress has been made in planning for and evaluating the quality of education provided and this remains an area for improvement. However, the school is committed to raising standards and set challenging targets for reading, writing, mathematics and science in the end of key stage national tests in 1998. These were met or exceeded in all subjects except science and showed an improvement in attainment over the previous two years.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

75.The school is generously staffed to provide the required curriculum for the under-fives and Key Stage 1 and to meet the range of pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs. All teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. During the inspection one class was being taught by a supply teacher for three days each week, taking the place of a member of staff on maternity leave. A designated special needs co-ordinator is appropriately knowledgeable and experienced. Co-ordinators are in place for all National Curriculum subjects and for the under-fives and some of their responsibilities reflect qualifications and expertise. Co-ordinators for mathematics and history are taking these responsibilities temporarily during the period of staff absence. The school employs a very high level of well-qualified support staff who work both with the under-fives and with pupils who have special educational needs. A full-time technician for information technology has a high level of expertise and works closely with class teachers to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. There is a satisfactory number of midday supervisors to ensure that pupils are well supervised at lunch times. The school has a high level of administrative support and these staff are well qualified and experienced to support the teachers in the smooth running of the school.

76.Procedures for the appraisal of both teaching and non-teaching staff are well established and help to target staff development appropriately. Whilst procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers are satisfactory, those for the induction of teachers new to the school or for those changing curriculum responsibility are unsatisfactory. An information leaflet outlines procedures and routines for the benefit of new or supply staff. Newly appointed teachers do not always receive mentoring as a right and are not always adequately supported by colleagues. Many teachers attend courses and there has been recent school staff training in literacy, information technology and numeracy in line with national initiatives. Links between staff training and school-initiated developments are not as clearly planned for and a policy for staff development is currently due for revision. All support staff have opportunities to undertake training in line with their individual needs.

77.The school provides an attractive environment. It is set in extensive grounds with grassed play areas and hard playground space. There is ample space for outdoor games, and the trees, shrubs, grassy areas and the small enclosed courtyard with its herb garden offer pupils opportunities to study wildlife. The internal accommodation is good. Classrooms are light and spacious with home

bays and cloakroom facilities. Easy access to the outside helps to make movement in and out of the building quiet and ordered. An information technology suite and a small library are recent additions that enhance the accommodation and enrich pupils' learning opportunities. Because of falling numbers two large classrooms stand empty and there are no plans for the use of this valuable resource. Staff work hard to create an attractive environment where pupils enjoy their learning. The building is in good condition and is very well maintained by the school keeper.

78.The accommodation for the under-fives is good. There are two classrooms and a large space known as 'The Block'. The block is large enough to hold assemblies for the two classes and imaginative role-play on a large scale. There is immediate access to outdoor areas for children to explore the environment and play on tricycles and pull and push toys. Displays in both classrooms are two-dimensional and few are interactive to reinforce children's learning.

79.The quality and number of learning resources ranges from very good to just satisfactory. They are mainly satisfactory. In information technology they are very good, with resources including different computers, a digital camera and software programmes for the whole curriculum. In mathematics, some aspects of English, physical education and design and technology they are good. In all other subjects they are satisfactory, although there are insufficient appropriate artefacts in history, geography and religious education. There is a satisfactory number of good pupils' reference books, but these are stored in boxes behind a screen in the library and are only brought out when particular topics are being studied. Pupils do not have the opportunity to use these books independently on a regular basis or to become familiar with their content or format. Resources are generally stored in classrooms with a small number held centrally and are clean, well cared for and accessible. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school enrich the curriculum for all pupils.

The efficiency of the school

80.The headteacher, governors and school administrator manage the school's financial resources efficiently. Due to a fall in numbers of pupils on roll it has been necessary to plan expenditure very carefully to keep within the allocated budget. Financial planning is sound and the school has been successful in using its financial resources for the benefit of the pupils, whilst maintaining a very small balance for contingencies. Expenditure has been directed towards some of the school's educational priorities, such as maintaining a high level of teaching assistants and providing resources for literacy and for information technology. Since the last inspection costs have been included in the school plan to assist with financial planning. However, the plan lacks clear intended outcomes for the planned developments and this limits the school's opportunities to judge effectiveness of spending decisions.

81.The school makes effective and efficient use of its teaching staff and teaching assistants overall. Teachers are deployed to make the best use of their experience and expertise. Insufficient time is made available for teaching assistants in the reception classes to plan the work with teachers and to understand their important role. The teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs are deployed well to work with those pupils who require most support with their learning. In some classes they are used very effectively to help pupils to participate in whole-class discussions. However, on too many occasions they are not used fully enough during these times. The computer technician is deployed very well to prepare programs connected with work undertaken in classrooms and to teach pupils specific information technology skills.

82.The hard work of teachers of the under-fives and the commitment that they show ensures that resources, materials and the accommodation are used fully to provide pupils with a range of appropriate experiences and learning situations. In Key Stage 1 teachers make good use of classroom space and areas such as the hall and library although limited use is made of the two classrooms that are not needed for full-time class teaching and the information technology room is used irregularly during the day. Learning resources for subjects are appropriate in quantity and range overall and are used satisfactorily to support pupils' progress in lessons.

83.Funds received for pupils with special educational needs and for development of the library and the information technology suite have been used to good effect in improving the provision and support for pupils' progress. Grants for staff professional development have been spent fully and in recent years have enabled the school to implement the literacy hour effectively and to improve teachers' information technology skills.

84.The school has extended the amount of time available for teaching each week so that it now exceeds the minimum recommended. Lessons start on time and teachers generally ensure that they maintain a satisfactory pace in the work so that the pupils benefit from the time available.

85.The school administrator has very good procedures for financial control and gives very good support to the headteacher and governing body both in budget planning and monitoring expenditure. Budget expenditure is checked regularly by the headteacher, chair of governors and the finance committee and reports are made appropriately to the full governing body. The school has not had a recent audit of its financial procedures.

86.Day-to-day administration proceeds with calm efficiency and purpose. A team of office staff carries out the duties effectively and responsibilities are well defined. Administrative and support staff and teaching staff work well together to ensure that the school operates effectively overall.

87.Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average and the school has above average costs. Balancing these factors against pupils' satisfactory progress overall enabling them to achieve average standards at the end of Year 2, the satisfactory quality of education offered and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, the school is judged to offer satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

88. On entry to the reception classes, attainment for many children is just below that expected nationally. Assessment is made when pupils enter the school and reveals that the majority of pupils need to develop language and literacy skills. They need opportunities to develop the fine manipulative skills necessary to write and to explore the creative side of the curriculum. Their mathematical skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical skills are generally developed in line with their age and children have had the experience of making friends in pre-school settings.

89. The majority of children come to school confident and happy after a very good programme of induction. Through the careful attention of all staff, good relationships are built that ensure that children and parents have a very good introduction to the school and a positive start to education. The induction of this age group is one of the school's strengths.

90. Children enter school in the year that they become five either in the September or January depending on their birth dates. Initially, the youngest attend on a part-time basis. Children have the opportunity to engage in a range of activities that enables them to develop the essential skills in all the areas of learning and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Due to the inspection taking place early in the academic year many of the children were receiving part-time education.

Language and Literacy

91. The children enter with the attainment just below that expected for their age, particularly in conversational skills, vocabulary depth and hand control for writing. They make sound progress overall, but the higher attaining are not stretched sufficiently. Attainment by the age of five remains slightly below what is expected for pupils of that age. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory.

92. The activities provided foster children's language and literacy skills. They are encouraged to listen attentively and enjoy story time. Imaginative, spontaneous play is encouraged by members of staff, who intervene carefully to ensure that language is developed and children's vocabulary is increased. Children were seen taking on the role of Red Riding Hood in Granny's cottage using the appropriate language. Teachers give children opportunities to talk confidently about their experiences and interests during registration time. Children are encouraged to recognise and write their own names. They are taught the skills necessary for reading in a structured way. Parts of the literacy hour strategy are taught but the length of time the children sit without activity is far too long and their attention wanders. All children enjoy the big books and listen most attentively. Parents are expected to be involved in the learning process and help each evening by hearing their children read and commenting on the book being read.

Mathematics

93. Mathematical development on entry is that expected for children of their age. Children make satisfactory progress and reach the expected levels by the time they are five. Teaching is satisfactory but does not always extend pupils enough.

94. Teachers support learning in mathematics with a wide variety of resources. Children make progress in counting skills, number recognition and mathematical language. They are able to count further than five. Some children can count to 15 but the majority have difficulty after 10. They know the names of common shapes such as square, triangle and circle. Through role-play, children are accustomed to using money and telling the time. Sand and water play reinforces capacity and volume.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

95. Children enter school with sound knowledge and understanding of the world around them and make satisfactory progress during the reception year to reach the expected levels by the age of five. They are encouraged to observe, explore and describe the world around them through activities linked to the topic being studied. Children explore seeds and fruits using the observational lens to enlarge the fascinating features. They demonstrate curiosity and a keen interest in the objects around them. They carefully watch the hyacinth bulbs roots grow in water and make a “hypothesis”. They are shown how to access information from CD ROMs and although the text is beyond their years, with the help of the technician, pictures of wolves are found to compile a book for the topic of Little Red Riding Hood. They learn about geography during registration when they talk about the weather. History comes alive when a retired teacher visits the class to answer children’s questions on her school times, 50 years ago. Knowledge and understanding of the World is taught satisfactorily but lacks pace and challenge particularly for the most able children. There were rarely differentiated activities in this area of learning.

Creative Development

96. Children make sound progress in creative work and they reach the expected levels by the age of five. They explore sound through singing and experimenting with untuned percussion instruments. They paint observational pictures of the Little Red Hen with expressive brown colours. They produce colourful paintings and enjoy experimenting with textures; for example good pictures of still-life fruits are produced when they paint in the style of pointillism. They make divas out of clay to hold candles for the Hindu festival of Diwali. Teaching of this area is always satisfactory.

Physical Development

97. Children have immediate access to outdoor play. Both reception classes are also taught physical education skills in the school hall. They move confidently and stop immediately when asked to do so by the teacher. Children make good progress in the development of manipulative skills. They handle pencils, crayons and brushes and play with constructional kits and small apparatus with increasing control. They are taught to use scissors and make good progress in following lines to be cut. The quality of teaching is good and promotes good progress so that pupils’ attainment is in line with what is expected by the age of five.

Personal and Social Development

98. Children attain a good standard in their personal and social development by the age of five and this contributes positively towards the purposeful atmosphere. They obviously enjoy their time in

the reception classes and make good progress in this area of learning. Children listen carefully to staff. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is often good but the number of staff and other helpers at times does not help to establish or promote independence. The members of staff pay particular attention to the sharing of equipment and waiting for one's turn to encourage co-operative play and develop the sense of what is fair.

99.The school has maintained the standards and caring practices found in the last inspection report.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

English

100. At the time of the last inspection in 1995 pupils' attainment in the national tests was above average in all aspects of the subject. From 1996 to 1998 standards dropped in these tests in reading and writing. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above in reading increased and attainment was in line with the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level improved and was in line with the national average. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was below the national average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds pupils' attainment in 1999 was average in reading and writing. Over the last three years the performance of boys has been lower than that of the girls in reading and higher than that of the girls in writing. In 1999 girls achieved higher standards than boys in all aspects of the subject. The higher attainment overall in 1999 was due to the emphasis that the school placed on raising attainment through setting challenging targets for the pupils.

101. At the time of this inspection pupils' attainment in Year 2 was judged to be in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of this age in speaking, reading and writing and above average in listening.

102. Pupils are very attentive listeners both to each other and to adults. They are able to listen for sustained periods even when the pace of the introduction to lessons is slow. Pupils are keen to respond to the teachers' questions but their responses are often brief. In informal situations, such as when talking at break times, pupils speak at greater length and ask questions and respond to each other's questions. In lessons they do not make enough progress in offering explanations, particularly in relation to what they have been doing.

103. Pupils make satisfactory progress with their reading. They read simple texts with accuracy and fluency, using a range of strategies for recognising unknown words. When reading aloud in the literacy hour they are able to read expressively, making good use of punctuation. By Year 2 pupils often show satisfactory understanding of what they have read and can talk about the main events in a story. However, they do not make enough progress across the key stage in understanding the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and few pupils are able to express reading preferences.

104. Pupils write for a range of purpose to support their work across the curriculum, such as writing captions for photographs of a visit to Tyland Barn, the story of The Good Samaritan or recording their investigations in science. Pupils make satisfactory progress with becoming independent writers and by Year 2 are generally able to sequence their writing although they do not often use more complex sentences. Their use of punctuation is satisfactory. Whilst pupils are able to spell some more common words correctly, they are often too reliant on the use of a phonetic approach. Their handwriting shows letters that are correctly formed and consistent in size but more pupils could progress earlier to using a cursive script.

105. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in English across the key stage. Progress in the lessons seen in Year 1 was mainly satisfactory and in Year 2 it was good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall because of the high level of adult support and work

that is often matched closely to their individual needs. On some occasions the higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress because teachers' expectations are too low, for example when pupils spend too much time colouring in drawn pictures as part of a writing task.

106. Pupils' response to the subject is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and present their work carefully. Pupils are able to work independently both individually and in a group, particularly when they know what they are expected to achieve. They co-operate well in using resources. Most pupils are confident when writing independently and are willing to try to write words that they are not sure how to spell. Pupils with special educational needs are not very secure in this aspect of their work unless supported by an adult. Pupils in Year 2 show good ability to apply knowledge learned in numeracy to literacy, such as identifying the word partition from mathematics to a lesson on the 'ar' sound in English. On occasions when the work is not challenging enough, pupils show initiative in finding alternative activities or lose concentration. Pupils are very enthusiastic when reading aloud as a class. They enjoy reading and many pupils take their reading book and a library book home to read regularly. Pupils' behaviour is good.

107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Year 1, with some that is good and some that is unsatisfactory. In Year 2 the quality of teaching is of good or higher quality, with a little that is excellent.

108. The literacy hour is implemented satisfactorily across the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and often use the subject specific language effectively. They select texts to motivate the pupils and give appropriate amount of time to discussion. They organise the activities well and manage the pupils effectively so that work is usually purposeful. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants within individual and small group tasks, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. They plan work for these pupils which relates to the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers make good use of the skills of the computer technician to extend the work of the classroom, and of appropriate computer software.

109. Where teaching is good or better, teachers are lively in their approach so that they stimulate the interest of the pupils. They provide extension activities for the higher attainers and explain to the pupils what is expected by the end of the lesson in terms of the quantity and quality of work to be achieved. They plan guided reading sessions very carefully so that they know which reading skills they are intending to promote and make assessments of pupils' individual progress during this activity. This has a positive impact on the pupils' progress. Teachers maintain a good balance between teacher and pupil talk and pupils are given time to reflect before answering.

110. In the parts of lessons where teaching is least effective, teachers often plan different work for the ability groups but there is not enough challenge for the higher attainers. Their objectives for guided reading are not clear and they do not involve pupils as a group. They sometimes ask and answer their own questions, without giving pupils time to respond. In writing tasks, teachers do not explain which aspects the pupils are to improve which means that work is not as purposeful and the pace lessens.

111. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively. They set precise targets for pupils and these are displayed in the pupils' writing books and are often referred to when teachers check pupils' work with them. Teachers make good use of homework to extend the work of the classroom and pupils regularly have reading, spelling and other literacy tasks to complete at home. Parents are generally very helpful and make frequent comments in the home-school contact book.

112.The school is planning successfully to meet literacy framework. All pupils have full access to the curriculum but this is most secure where teachers plan together and share their expertise. Good policies are available to help teachers to understand the school's approaches to the different aspects of the subject. However, there is insufficient detailed guidance to ensure that all teachers have consistent expectations of what pupils are to achieve. The co-ordinator has monitored and evaluated teaching very effectively since the implementation of the literacy hour. She is aware of the areas in need of development and currently is preparing strategies to help the staff. However, the cycle of monitoring needs to be more frequent and closely related to staff professional development to ensure the maximum school improvement

113.The school's procedures for assessment are good and enable them to track the progress of pupils. These have been very useful when setting targets for pupils. The school is committed to raising pupils' attainment and has set challenging targets for the end of key stage national tests for the Year 2000 to build on recent improvements in attainment.

114.Resources overall for English are satisfactory and good for the literacy hour. A good range of computer software supports work in all aspects of the subject. Resources are readily available and well organised. Overall there are sufficient reference books within the school but too few are available within classrooms.

Mathematics

115. At the time of the last inspection in 1995 pupils' attainment in the national tests was above average. From 1996 to 1997 standards dropped in these tests. In 1998 pupils' attainment was close to the national average at the expected level and below the national average at the higher level. In 1999 there was an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level and above and attainment overall was just above the national average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds, pupils' attainment in that year was just above average. Over the last three years the performance of boys had been higher than that of girls but in 1999 girls achieved higher standards than boys. The higher overall attainment in 1999 was due to the emphasis that the school placed on raising attainment through setting specific targets for pupils. The school is committed to raising attainment and has set challenging targets for the current year group in the Year 2000.

116. At the time of this inspection pupils' attainment was judged to be mainly in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of this age. Differences in this attainment and the results in the most recent test results are accounted for by the higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs than in Year 2 in 1999.

117. Pupils at the lower end of the school are beginning to know number facts by heart and to be able to calculate mentally. They work confidently within 20, can estimate reasonably, know the properties of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes and have an appropriate understanding of time. They can use their knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes to estimate the number of moves needed to take a Roamer along the sides of a square. They are often able to use correct mathematical vocabulary. In Year 2 pupils work within and above 100, and are encouraged to explain their methods and reasoning using correct mathematical terms. They are able to apply thinking from one aspect of their learning to another. These pupils use co-ordinates successfully in geography lessons. They can investigate how to establish which day of the week falls on a certain date and arrive at a correct result. They are able to tackle calculations in different ways and to explain their methods clearly to the class.

118. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress. Teachers plan work for pupils of differing abilities. Whilst pupils with special educational needs often make good progress due to the good adult support and appropriate work which they are given, the higher attaining pupils, particularly in the younger classes, are frequently challenged insufficiently. These pupils do not always make satisfactory progress.

119. The quality of learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils work steadily and with a good level of concentration. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and use resources appropriately. The older pupils respond well to challenge in practical tasks and in mental work and have a positive attitude to mathematics. They can work independently or collaboratively as required. However, despite evidence of some opportunities for independence and for showing initiative in lessons in Year 2, this aspect of pupils' learning is underdeveloped across the school.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with a little that is very good and some that is unsatisfactory. The implementation of the numeracy hour is in the very early stages and whilst most teachers plan satisfactorily for the oral part of the lesson, some find difficulty in organising appropriate group work for pupils of different abilities. Where teaching is good teachers make

clear to pupils the purpose of the work and their expectations in terms of the quantity of work to be completed in a given time. This approach ensures that pupils work at a good pace. In other lessons that have some shortcomings pupils set their own pace which is often too slow and many tasks are too narrow and prescribed. Many teachers use questions to good effect, to elicit information, to reinforce previous learning and to assess pupils' understanding. Pupils are given homework every week, which is sometimes a practical and sometimes a written task and the co-operation of parents is gained in ensuring that the work is done. Teachers mark the homework carefully and discuss it with pupils as appropriate, giving the exercise status and value. This enhances the pupils' learning.

121. Mathematics is allocated sufficient time, and statutory requirements are met. The school provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A range of good procedures is in place for assessment. Careful marking, regular questioning and observation of pupils, sampling of pupils' work and analysis of national test results at the end of Year 2 all add to the teachers' knowledge of pupils' attainment. This knowledge is used when planning the curriculum or to meet pupils' needs in lessons. However, not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils and as a result there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the work planned for highest attainers.

122. The co-ordinator is currently on maternity leave and another member of staff has temporary responsibility for the development of the subject and the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. She is knowledgeable, and experienced and well placed to lead the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which so far has included an information evening for parents and staff training.

123. An audit of maths resources was carried out before the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy when resources were found to be satisfactory. Since then a substantial amount of money has been spent and resources are now good. Most are stored in classrooms, are well organised and in good condition and are easily accessible to pupils. The provision of a sufficient number of good quality resources makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Science

124. By the time pupils leave the school they attain standards that are in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment and progress remain the same as in previous inspection report.

125. At the time of the last inspection in 1995 pupils' attainment in the end of key stage teacher assessments was above average. In 1999 in these assessments the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above was in line with the national average and the percentage achieving the higher level was above the national average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds, pupils' attainment in that year was average. The attainment of the girls was higher than that of the boys.

126. By the end of the key stage pupils understand that light sources are natural and man-made and

demonstrate and record where the source of light comes from and if it is reflected light. They use vocabulary such as reflected, lens and batteries to describe the light source. They study different types of materials for different objects and sort them into natural and man-made. They record materials that can be squashed, stretched or changed by heat. These materials are collected together and made into “friends”, for example Peter Paper Man and Polly Plastics. Pupils record their findings accurately in a variety of ways. When they study which of the three pigs houses will stand up to a gust of wind, some make a quick sketch and write a few sentences. This work is then used to form part of the combined class recording at a later date. Some use of tabular form was evident. Pupils’ ability in experimental and investigative work is of a good standard, particularly when teachers or helpers do not over-direct them.

127. Pupils’ work in books and lessons show that they link their work satisfactorily to other subjects through the areas of study undertaken. Pupils are developing their understanding of the practical applications of science and how these affect our everyday lives. For example young pupils in Year 1 learn how a simple circuit can be broken with a switch and that the number of light bulbs on a circuit affects the light produced.

128. Progress by the end of the key stage is satisfactory. Many pupils enter school with some sound experience and general knowledge that is then built upon during their stay in the reception classes. It is particularly significant that in the reception year they develop a well-rounded level of technical vocabulary and scientific language to describe their findings orally and in writing. In Year 1 pupils study fruit seeds and plants and record their observations in their books on a grid. One pupil writes “Leaves have veins, we have veins”. Pupils in Year 2 develop a greater degree of sophistication in their descriptions and describe the surfaces of materials that reflect light “as being smooth, shiny and not letting light go through, it just bounces off.”

129. Pupils’ written work becomes more complex and detailed and the presentation of recording improves. Pupils make sound progress but the development of independent ways of working through the key stage is not always present due to the amount of direct support given. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to be responsible for organising parts of their own work. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment. They join in the full range of work. However in one lesson in Year 2 some pupils with special educational needs were taken out of the lesson to complete English work and therefore missed the opportunity to gain from the teacher’s input in science.

130. Pupils show very good levels of concentration and perseverance. They have good attitudes to science and clearly enjoy their work. They behave well inside the classroom and on visits. They work well in mixed gender groups and offer sensible, constructive ideas to class discussions. They settle very well to written tasks and handle science equipment well.

131. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in the main, and enthusiasm, which they convey to their pupils. Lessons are planned well and teachers often prepare different work for the different ability groups. However, teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly in Year 1. Teachers in Year 2 use very good questioning techniques to make pupils think very carefully about their responses. They use technical vocabulary and scientific language and this, as well as the opportunities that they provide for pupils to develop their language in discussion, is the main reason why pupils’ use of technical vocabulary develops so well. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and trust

them to behave well when undertaking investigations. Teachers made satisfactory assessments of the pupils' work.

Information Technology

132. By the end of the key stage standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. Pupils use information to complement and support other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, art and geography. Pupils in Year 2 use the word processor to write an extract from the diary of a tadpole and the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Using the word processor pupils write first drafts of their work or type their previously written recording of science experiments on growing a bean plant from a seed. They use data-handling programs in mathematics to make graphs of favourite flowers and extract information about seeds from a CD ROM. They use control programs to make a programmable robot follow a given course on the floor. Information technology is an important part of the school's work but it is too directed and overseen to promote pupils' independence in their learning, or to ensure pupils know what technology will do for them.

133. Pupils use information technology with increased confidence as they move through the key stage. Regular and frequent access to computers enables pupils to make at least sound progress in developing their capability in information technology and there is a clear development of skills. Pupils use the mouse and keyboard controls with increasing proficiency to 'click and drag' and to give basic commands. Year 1 pupils can use a sentence program to rearrange jumbled words into a correct sentence. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Information technology plays a sound part in the planning of work for these pupils. They use programs specifically designed to improve their phonic skills and word-processing programs to help them record findings, in addition to the range of programs enjoyed by all pupils. All pupils have excellent access to all technological equipment, including tape recorders, both individually and as members of a group.

134. Pupils thoroughly enjoy using information technology and can be relied upon to work sensibly without constant adult supervision. They take turns to input information and wait very patiently for their work to be printed. They share ideas well about how best to use the programs and talk eagerly about what they expect to happen. At present they do not have individual 'floppy disks' on which they can keep an individual record of work.

135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory personal skills in information technology. The technician who is based in the technology suite has excellent understanding and is used satisfactorily to complement the teaching programme. Members of staff give good levels of support and praise to pupils using computers. Teachers plan information technology, as an integral part of their work and this is why there are such good links with other subjects. The technician works to a plan of teaching from the teachers' short-term plan to ensure that all pupils have equal access to technology when appropriate. She incorporates the use of the network; pupils are introduced to another Medway School linked to Thames View and are taught how to correspond using e-mail.

136.The school has very good resources for information technology. The information technology suite is a small room, which houses five computers but it cannot easily accommodate a class of 30 pupils. The school has recently appointed a technician who is most knowledgeable, enthusiastic and conscientious. However, there has not yet been time to evaluate fully the effect and efficiency of this initiative.

137.The school has made good improvements in this subject since the last inspection. It now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in full and control technology is taught in a systematic way, including the use of programmable toys and tape recorders.

Religious education

138.At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have achieved the standards expected in the Kent Agreed Syllabus. They have an appropriate knowledge of Biblical stories and of the major festivals of Christianity. They learn of special places, clothes and food of Hinduism and know that the Koran is a special book for Muslims. They have some experience of aspects of other religions. Pupils learn to consider concepts such as forgiveness and to ponder the impact of their own actions on others. They learn to put themselves in another's position and to consider their feelings. Pupils of all abilities and from differing faiths make satisfactory progress.

139.Pupils show real interest in their lessons and are keen to take part and tell of their own experiences. They listen attentively in assemblies and can maintain rapt attention when invited to reflect calmly while looking at a lighted candle flame. They are able to consider others.

140.The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers tell stories well and use questions appropriately to elicit information in order to assess what pupils have understood and to take them forward in their thinking. In some classes the quality of interaction is good and pupils are taught to consider the effects of their actions on others, for example what it does to people's self-esteem when they are paid an unsolicited compliment. Teachers provide opportunities for reflection and in an assembly pupils were asked to consider that things may be of immense value without being costly. Some teachers provide stimulating practical experiences that motivate pupils, such as demonstrating how Hindu women wear a sari and pupils making rangoli patterns and tasting special food. All teachers teach religious education and are supported well by non-teaching staff and parents.

141.The school currently follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus and this is supported by a school policy and subject guidelines. The guidelines are unspecific however and do not specify what should be taught at particular times or in which year group. Teaching is planned from topic titles. Whilst teachers in the reception classes and in Year 2 plan religious education together, those in Year 1 do not. Where teachers share their planning, they achieve some consistency in coverage across the year group. However, areas selected for study often relate to teachers' personal preference or to annual festivals. There is no provision for building on pupils' learning systematically from year to year and this is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for a scheme of work and this is planned for as a priority for development when the new Medway Agreed Syllabus is introduced early next year.

142.Resources for the subject are satisfactory. Reference books are stored in boxes in the library

rather than in classes which means that they are not used by pupils other than when a specific religious education topic is being studied. There are very few religious education books in class libraries and only a limited number of artefacts to support learning.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

143. At the time of the last inspection the school's provision for art was judged to be in need of improvement in two respects. The time allocation was insufficient and art was under-represented in the curriculum as a subject in its own right. The school has taken some steps to improve the teaching of art by providing a training day for the teachers and reviewing the subject policy and guidance. These documents offer broad subject guidance and a specific time allocation is given. From scrutiny of past work and observing lessons it is evident that pupils have some experiences of printing, painting from their imagination and direct experience and collage work. However, there is no clear programme for art that provides for the systematic building of skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year. As a result whilst attainment is good for example when pupils paint in the style of Monet or print on fabric, some attainment is satisfactory when pupils draw from observation in Year 1. Pupils have some opportunities to develop specific art skills, such as colour mixing and to increase their understanding of the work of artists and they make satisfactory progress. The way the work is planned results in art supporting progress in other subjects effectively, for example when pupils create candle wax designs relating to their study of Diwali in religious education. However, it can also lead to pupils having experience of techniques on occasions at a similar level across the year groups. Whilst some teachers in year groups plan together to ensure that pupils have similar experiences in both classes, others plan separately so that it is difficult for teachers to keep track of what pupils have covered across the key stage particularly as assessment procedures are left to individual teachers.

144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some that was good and a little that was unsatisfactory in lessons seen. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants to give additional support to groups of pupils but most teachers also work with the class to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress during the lesson. Adults motivate the pupils well by their own enthusiasm and explain the techniques clearly. In the better teaching pupils have some choice in the materials used and questioning promotes the pupils' enquiry more fully, such as when pupils are asked to explore shades when colour mixing. However, too often pupils' work is over-directed so that there is some lack of challenge and all pupils work at a similar level. Where teachers are clear about the art skills to be taught, pupils make satisfactory progress across the key stage from mixing primary colours to make secondary colours in Year 1 to mixing shades of colour in Year 2.

145. Pupils' response to the subject is satisfactory and good in some respects. They are enthusiastic and concentrate well. They co-operate effectively in sharing materials and are appreciative of each other's achievements, as well as taking a pride in their own. The older pupils can take some responsibility for moving from one stage of an activity to another and can make some choices in the use of materials but this is not a strong enough feature of the pupils' learning.

146. Resources in the subject are satisfactory to support work in painting, drawing and printing. These are readily available to pupils in lessons. A good range of prints of the work of well known

artists has been purchased recently and these are used effectively in developing pupils' understanding of art techniques.

147. The co-ordinator has monitored and evaluated teaching and learning this year and has gained an overview of the subject. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the quality of teaching of art since the last inspection but still needs to ensure a structured teaching approach to skills and techniques within its planned curriculum which was an identified weakness in the last inspection report.

Design and technology

148. Only one lesson was observed in design and technology during the inspection and judgements about attainment and progress are therefore made from the scrutiny of pupils' work on display, discussion with the subject co-ordinator and pupils and from pupils' past work.

149. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes better progress. They have a satisfactory understanding of the designing and making processes and in Year 2 learn to evaluate their work. Evidence suggests that pupils use a range of tools and materials and can select appropriate methods and materials for particular tasks, for instance when designing a bag for a specific use, or when making houses with opening doors. Pupils make candles for a display on light, combining art and design and technology techniques to produce a finished article. Pupils are used to working with a variety of equipment, including saws, which they are taught to use safely. Pupils can talk about what they have done and are beginning to appraise their work and to be aware that articles might be improved. They are learning to appreciate the properties and possibilities of materials

150. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and proud of their achievements. Design and technology is clearly a familiar activity from the way pupils discuss it, the amount of work on display and the photographs of what has been covered.

151. Teachers plan design and technology as part of areas of study that involve a range of subjects but identify the specific subject skills clearly on planning sheets. A policy and scheme of work make clear what pupils in each year group should be able to do. Teachers in the reception year and in Year 2 plan together to decide how to cover the subject but those in Year 1 do not. This means that coverage is inconsistent across the classes in that year group and the school cannot be sure that all pupils build systematically on their learning from year to year. The co-ordinator has worked hard in the year that she has had responsibility for the subject. She has monitored classroom practice and ordered and organised resources well. She maintains a portfolio of pupils' work that is accessible to all staff and indicates the standards expected. Design and technology is taught on a regular basis and staff are confident in teaching the subject.

152. Resources are good and are well organised and easily accessible except for some pupils' reference books which are stored in an inaccessible part of the library.

Geography

153. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage in the development of their geographical skills. They are able to recall previous work and develop satisfactory enquiry skills, for example in planning and recalling directions on an imaginary route that Red Riding Hood took through the forest on her way to her Granny's cottage.

154. Throughout the school there are records of Bobtail's journeys across the globe. Pupils through this learn about the different climates, landscapes and cultures that exist and about some of the conditions that affect housing. They gain a satisfactory understanding of where they belong and of environmental issues. For example, one pupil in Year 2 wrote "the good thing about where I live is the park and I know a lot of people." They record the effects of man on the landscape and record "Things could be improved by more rubbish bins and the trains make my mum's car and washing dusty."

155. Pupils have an enthusiastic attitude to geography and collaborate sensibly in group activities, for example when they work out how to programme a toy robot to make a right angle turn for Red Riding Hood's journey. They make a good response to environmental issues and in discussion show that they appreciate some social aspects of geography. They are concerned at the amount of destruction in the rainforest and appreciate that the trees growing in these areas need a lot of water and 'hot' sunshine.

156. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, clearly focused questions are used to promote pupils' thinking and teachers encourage pupils to acquire skills through practical activities. Good use is made generally of information technology to support pupils' enquiry skills. Visits extend pupils' knowledge of a contrasting locality.

157. The opportunities provided by pupils', parents and teachers who go abroad and send postcards are fully exploited by teachers to locate countries on maps and globes. Most pupils are 'well travelled' through this initiative and have developed an awareness that the world reaches beyond their present locality.

History

158. Only a part of one history lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Judgements are therefore made from a careful scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display and from discussion with some Year 2 pupils.

159. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress overall and their attainment is most often satisfactory. They can use common words relating to the passage of time and develop an appropriate sense of chronology. Through their comparison of schooling in the present day and in Victorian times, they begin to recognise differences in people's lives in different periods and in their study of the Gunpowder Plot are able to consider the reasons for, and the consequences of, people's actions. They know that information can be found in books, pictures and CD ROMs or from talking to people. Pupils are happy to ask and answer questions about the past. In one Year 2 class pupils are able to observe artefacts from the past, to decide where and at what period they were used and to record their decisions. In some classes discussion about Remembrance Day supports the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and links with other subjects were seen in some art work and displays concerning grandparents and firework night.

160.The school has improved its provision for history since the last inspection. The subject is taught as part of an area of study that involves a range of subjects but specific historical skills, knowledge and understanding are addressed separately. The time allocation is now satisfactory and all elements of the subject are covered. The policy and scheme of work were revised in 1997 and form a sound basis for the teaching of the subject, although the lack of shared planning in Year 1 means that coverage and consistency of approach cannot be assured. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Co-ordination of the subject is undertaken on a temporary basis due to the absence of the teacher with permanent responsibility.

161.Resources for history are only satisfactory despite recent funding. Reference books are stored in boxes in an inaccessible area of the library and are for the use of staff only. Very few history books are stored in classrooms unless they form part of a current topic, thus depriving pupils of the opportunity to browse or to have their historical interests stimulated or satisfied. Artefacts are few. Each class makes at least one visit to a place of interest each year and these visits often support the curriculum in history effectively.

Music

162.Pupils make good progress throughout the school, building effectively on early experiences. By Year 2 most pupils can listen to music, sing with satisfactory awareness of rhythm and pitch, compose, record their compositions in symbolic form and perform. Year 2 pupils have the chance to learn to play the recorder, and about half the pupils choose to do so.

163.In lessons seen pupils' attainment was often good. They were able to compose music in parts by using their voices and by clapping and tapping their knees and combining these to form a whole composition. They were observed working collaboratively in groups to produce music for fireworks using untuned instruments. These pupils were able to record their compositions in symbols and to play from them. Very little singing was heard during the inspection other than in an assembly, as pupils do not normally sing unaccompanied and a pianist was only present on the one occasion.

164.Pupils enjoy music and work with good levels of concentration. They are able to collaborate in groups or as a class to produce a finished product. They take an obvious pride in their achievement. Pupils behave very well.

165.The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, lessons are well planned and expectations of pupils are high. Teachers organise lessons well and manage the pupils effectively.

166.The co-ordinator is well qualified for the responsibility and undertakes it well. A policy and detailed scheme of work help teachers to ensure subject coverage so that they build on pupils' learning from year to year. Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, although not on a regular basis and has had some opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.

167.Resources for the subject are good in quality, although the good range of percussion

instruments is stored in the hall and are inaccessible to pupils. Very few music resources are found in classrooms and pupils have only structured lesson times in which to experiment with them.

Physical Education

168.Pupils' attainments in physical education are generally satisfactory for their age. They are developing control and co-ordination in travelling, jumping and balancing, and acquiring competence in a range of game skills. One Year 1 class created satisfactory sequences of linked rolls and balances, whilst a Year 2 class showed appropriate skills in a simple games situation. Pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of space when moving in the hall.

169.Pupils' progress throughout the key stage is satisfactory in gymnastics and games. No dance lesson was observed but pupils demonstrate good body control and awareness of good quality shapes when completing a sequence of movements and balances. Pupils develop a sound range of games' skills, but have limited opportunity to practise them in competitive situations. They can sustain a good level of energetic exercise in the circuit-training programme and are becoming increasingly aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils can feel their heart beating faster and stronger as the lesson develops. They find the activities demanding, yet enjoyable.

170.In most cases pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They are keen and respond well to guidance and their behaviour is good. They are aware of the need for safe practice and respond with good levels of enthusiasm.

171.The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a little that is good and a similar amount that is unsatisfactory. Teachers show sound subject knowledge, provide appropriate tasks and teach at a lively pace. They give pupils the opportunity to practise independently and refine their skills. When teaching has less impact on the quality of pupils' performances, insufficient time is allowed.

172.Adults do not always wear suitable footwear for physical education to provide a good role model for pupils to follow. Pupils do not change consistently into suitable kit, which is a weakness. The space available for physical activity in the hall has been reduced by the storage of a large amount of furniture that is not associated with physical education.

173.There has been no change since the last inspection in the standards achieved in the subject. The changing into suitable physical education clothing was not noted during the last inspection. This shows a deterioration in expected standards of safety and health promotion.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

174. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors who spent a total of 12 inspector days in the school. During the week discussions were held with many pupils, including formal discussions with representatives from every class and with all teaching and non-teaching staff. The work of pupils from every class was inspected in detail outside of lesson time. Assessments were made of pupils' reading within the literacy lessons and by hearing approximately ten percent of pupils read individually, covering the ability range. The school's documentation was examined, including budget details. 58 lessons or parts of lessons were observed covering all subjects. Observations were made of assemblies, registration periods, play-times and lunchtimes. The school's attendance records and pupils' records and test results were examined in detail. Prior to the inspection a meeting was held for all parents and 21 parents attended. A questionnaire was sent to all parents requesting their views of the school and 47 responses were returned.

DATA AND INDICATORS

180. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	151	2	66	24

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	1.14 : 1

Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	166

Average class size:	21.6
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	378,487.00

Total Expenditure	374,222.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,790.54
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,553.00
Balance carried forward to next year	9,818.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 151

Number of questionnaires returned: 47

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	40.4	53.2	4.3	2.1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	61.7	29.8	6.4	0	2.1
The school handles complaints from parents well	14.6	46.3	36.6	2.4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	29.8	53.2	12.8	4.3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23.4	61.7	10.6	4.3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	29.8	55.3	14.9	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	19.1	53.2	21.3	6.4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	23.4	61.7	12.8	2.1	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	29.8	59.6	8.5	2.1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	37.0	52.2	10.9	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	57.4	40.4	0	2.1	0

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year