

INSPECTION REPORT

**SELLINDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Ashford**

LEA area : Kent

**Unique Reference Number : 118387
Inspection Number: 186970**

Headteacher : Mrs G Burgess

**Reporting inspector : Mrs J Nelson
20991**

Dates of inspection : 13 - 15 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707474

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Type of school : | Infant and Junior |
| Type of control : | County |
| Age range of pupils : | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils : | Mixed |
| School address : | Main Road Sellindge Ashford Kent TN25 6JY |
| Telephone number : | 01303 812073 |
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| Appropriate authority : | The governing body |
| Name of Chair of Governors : | Mr M Andrews |
| Date of previous inspection : | February 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Mrs J Nelson, RgI | Under-fives Mathematics Science Information technology History Geography Equal opportunities | Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency |
| Mr M Hudson, Lay Inspector | | Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources |
| Mrs A Storm | English Religious education Design and technology Art Music Physical education Special educational needs | Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision |

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The consistently high quality of teaching for the under-fives and pupils in lower Key Stage 1 is a strength.

- Improvements in national test results in 1999 for seven and 11 year olds.
- Academic progress is assessed very effectively.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good overall, and the excellent management skills of the headteacher are central to this.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The welfare of pupils is given a high priority.
- The partnership with parents is strong and effective.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Numeracy skills are not being sufficiently developed in other subjects. Progress is too slow in geography and art at Key Stage 2; pupils are not building up the skills systematically in these subjects.
- II. The oldest pupils often do not record work in a more advanced way than younger pupils in the same class, particularly in geography and science.
- III. The governing body has not formally planned for the implications of the recent rise in the school's roll, particularly in respect of aspects of accommodation which are limiting opportunities for practical activities for older pupils.

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school experienced much turbulence in leadership and staffing after the last inspection. For the past two years there has been reasonable stability. Staff have been able to press forward with improvements based on the key issues, and also on the recognition of the need to improve the behaviour of some pupils and to raise academic standards. Good improvements have been made, based on the needs identified in the school's updated action plan. Raising standards in literacy, mathematics and information technology have been focused on and positive outcomes are now being seen. The response to the key issues has been mainly good. Teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved from its previous unsatisfactory standard. There are now schemes of work, in all but art and music, which allow pupils to experience reasonable progression in building up skills year-on-year. However, there is still further work to be done, in geography and science particularly, to ensure that older pupils record their work using more advanced techniques than younger pupils in the same class. Staff expertise is now good overall. Management weaknesses have been dealt with effectively by the governing body. The financial procedures have been strengthened and are now good. Inspectors consider that the school has a very good capacity for further improvement.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

| Performance in: | Compared with all schools | Compared with similar schools | Key | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | | | <i>well above average</i> | <i>A</i> |
| | | | <i>above average</i> | <i>B</i> |
| | | | <i>average</i> | <i>C</i> |
| | | | <i>below average</i> | <i>D</i> |
| | | | <i>well below average</i> | <i>E</i> |
| | | | <i>very low</i> | <i>E*</i> |
| English | E* | E* | | |
| Mathematics | E* | E* | | |
| Science | E | E | | |

The school has very small year groups of pupils and caution is required when using national statistical information for comparisons; small schools' results can vary greatly from year to year. Information shown in the table above, for 1998, refers to fewer than ten pupils, most of whom were on the school's special educational needs register. Two-thirds of these pupils gained the average Level 4 in English and science. The English result was close to national results for this level. A third gained the average Level 4 in mathematics which was very low compared with results nationally. Test results last year, 1999, show markedly higher standards. In English, four-fifths of the pupils achieved at least the average Level 4 expected for 11 year olds, ten per cent gained the higher Level 5. In mathematics and science, all pupils achieved at least the average Level 4 standard; a fifth gained the higher Level 5 standard in mathematics and a third in science.

Quality of teaching

| Teaching in: | Under 5 | 5 - 7 years | 7 - 11 years |
|------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| English | Good | Good | Good |
| Mathematics | Good | Good | Good |
| Science | | Good | Satisfactory |
| Information technology | | Good | Satisfactory |
| Religious education | | Good | Satisfactory |
| Other subjects | Good | Good | Satisfactory |

The quality of teaching is good overall. Ninety-six per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and over a half of the teaching is good or better. Teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory. Almost a fifth of lessons seen were very well taught and there was one excellent lesson. Most of the very best teaching is for the under-fives and younger Key Stage 1 pupils.

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 | Very good in classes, the playground and the dining hall. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory and similar to the national average. Pupils arrive at school punctually. |
| Ethos* | Very good. |
| Leadership and management | Very good overall. The headteacher's contribution to leading the school forward is excellent. The governing body supports the school well but has not planned sufficiently for the recent, rapid rise in numbers of pupils. |
| Curriculum | Sound overall, and good for children under five and in Key Stage 1. There are good quality schemes of work in most subjects which play a positive part in raising standards. Art and music do not have schemes and this is limiting the quality of skills development in these subjects, particularly at Key Stage 2. Assessment strategies are a major strength. |
| Pupils with special educational needs | The provision for these pupils is well organised and enables them to make good progress. |
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | Provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good and it is very good for moral development. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation | Staff are well qualified with a good range of expertise and are well supported by learning assistants. Resources are adequate overall; information technology resources are very good; the non-fiction library stock and resources for religious education and geography are limited. The accommodation is well cared for, but one classroom is too small for its number of pupils which is hampering opportunities for practical activities. |
| Value for money | In keeping with most small schools costs per pupil are higher than the national average. The school provides good quality teaching, a very strong ethos and commitment to raising standards. It gives good 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 | What some parents are not happy about |
|---|---|
| <p>IV. The dedication and commitment of all the staff and particularly the headteacher's contribution to the life of the school.</p> <p>V. Staff are very welcoming and accessible.</p> <p>VI. A good range of clubs and activities are provided.</p> <p>VII. Problems are dealt with quickly and effectively.</p> <p>VIII. The school encourages positive values and good behaviour.</p> | <p>IX. No general matters of concern were</p> |

Inspectors confirm all the positive views which parents expressed about the school, both in the parents' survey and at the parents' meeting held to discuss their views.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:

- Improve pupils' progress by:
 - a) ensuring the use of numeracy is developed in other subjects, particularly geography and science;
 - b) using the new geography scheme effectively so pupils systematically experience the key skills;
 - c) writing schemes of work for art and music which ensure pupils build up their skills year by year;
 - d) ensuring older pupils are challenged to record work in a more advanced way than younger ones in the same class, particularly in science and the non-core subjects.

Points a) and c) are noted in the current school development plan.

(Paragraphs 13, 14, 17, 26, 34, 79, 86, 89, 93, 95, 102, 105, 110, 111, 112 and 120)

- Establish a strategic plan to manage the rising school roll and its implications for the accommodation, and in the short term find ways for older pupils to have more working space.

(Paragraphs 52, 56, 60, 69, 89, 94 and 125)

Each weakness is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

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

- Further develop the cross-curricular use of information technology, particularly at Key Stage 2.

(Paragraphs 85 and 99)

- Statutory requirements:

Ensure all the required information is present in the annual governors' report to parents.

(Paragraph 53)

- Improve resources for geography, religious education and the non-fiction library stock.

(Paragraphs 81, 104 and 112)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Sellindge Primary School is for pupils aged four to 11 years. It serves its local village community and pupils also come from nearby villages and towns. Pupils live mainly in social housing and 28 per cent are eligible for free school meals, a slightly higher proportion than the average nationally.
2. The school is a small one with 87 pupils, taught in three classes, and its size has fluctuated considerably over recent years. It is now in a period of rapid growth. Overall, there are slightly more boys than girls; in Years 3 and 6 there are many more boys, but Year 4 has a much higher number of girls. Pupils are admitted to the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. At the time of inspection ten reception children were attending part-time and all were under five. Baseline assessments, when children begin school, indicate that they have broadly average skills. Since the last inspection there has been no significant change in children's attainment when they start school. Five per cent, of pupils are from ethnic minority families and speak languages other than English at home. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs which is higher than the national average; these are mainly moderate difficulties with reading and writing. A third of these pupils have more severe learning disabilities and receive help from outside specialists, and three pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need which is above average.
3. The school aims to create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment, with high expectations of achievement in learning, friendship and behaviour, in which all members of the school community can grow in esteem and develop their potential as human beings. The school has recently been focusing on its teaching of English and mathematics in its drive to raise standards. Within this there has been a major thrust to improve pupils' reading skills. The development of information technology skills is another focus of the school development plan, as is the assessment of pupils' progress. The governing body has set targets for improving literacy standards, as judged by national tests for seven and 11 year olds over the coming three years. Targets for 11 year olds vary from year to year to reflect the proportions of pupils known to have special educational needs.

Key indicators

Note: The 1998 figures are included as a requirement of reporting at this stage in the academic year, rather than those for 1999.

4. Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1998 | 3 | 9 | 12 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | Girls | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| | Total | 7 | 8 | 11 |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above | School | 58 | 67 | 92 |
| | National | 80 | 81 | 84 |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | Girls | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| | Total | 7 | 11 | 11 |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above | School | 58 | 92 | 92 |
| | National | 81 | 85 | 86 |

5. **Attainment at Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1998 | 2 | 6 | 8 |

| National Curriculum Test Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | * | * | * |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 63 | 38 | 63 |
| | National | 65 | 59 | 69 |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | * | * | * |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 63 | 38 | 38 |
| | National | 65 | 65 | 72 |

* Fewer than ten pupils were in the cohort so details are not included in the table.

6. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions)
missed through absence for the
latest complete reporting year:

| | | % |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Authorised absence | School | 5.3 |
| | National comparative data | 5.7 |
| Unauthorised absence | School | 0.0 |
| | National comparative data | 0.5 |

7. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age)
during the previous year:

| | Number |
|--------------|--------|
| Fixed period | 0 |
| Permanent | 0 |

8. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

| | % |
|------------------------|----|
| Very good or better | 19 |
| Satisfactory or better | 96 |
| Less than satisfactory | 4 |

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

9. When children enter school, initial assessments (baseline assessments) reveal broadly average attainment in language and early mathematical development. Inspection evidence, which was mainly scrutiny of work from last year, shows that children under five make good progress overall. By five almost all attain or exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes¹ for children entering compulsory education. Their speaking skills are above average. Early reading and writing skills are good too. They make good progress in learning to recognise letters of the alphabet, their associated sounds, and their writing attempts are high quality. Mathematics skills are in line with expectations. Many are capable of adding to ten practically and some are extending this further with subtraction. Children's work shows good knowledge and understanding of the world. Their creative skills are at the expected level but it was not possible to make a judgement on physical development.
 10. The trend in national tests for seven year olds, from 1996 to 1998, was well below national average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 1998, reading and writing standards were well below average and mathematics standards were average. The standards were higher in mathematics, but lower in reading and writing, than those gained by pupils in similar types of schools, with up to 35 per cent free school meals. In 1999, standards rose markedly in reading and writing and almost all pupils gained the expected Level 2 standard, although few gained the higher Level 3. Teachers' assessments of science standards show most pupils gain the average Level 2 each year, but few are judged to reach the higher Level 3. At both key stages, as the numbers in each cohort are relatively small, caution is needed in making statistical comparisons, for example in interpreting any differences in performances between boys and girls. Many of the year groups have up to half the pupils on the special educational needs register and this has an impact on the standards these pupils achieve. The school considers that the improved standards in 1999 reflects its strong focus on improving reading skills, and the new teaching approaches for literacy.
 11. National tests for 11 year olds show a well below average picture in English, mathematics and science attainment between 1996 and 1998. In 1998 the cohort was just eight pupils, all but one of whom was on the special educational needs register, several at the higher levels, including two Statements of Special Educational Need. Despite this English results at Level 4 were close to the average, with two-thirds of pupils reaching this standard; however no pupils achieved the higher Level 5 so overall the standard was low. Mathematics results were very low and only a third of pupils gained the Level 4 standard. In science two-thirds of pupils achieved the average Level 4, but with no Level 5 attainment this was still well below average. Standards were very low overall in comparison with pupils in similar types of schools. No significant information could be gained by comparing boys' and girls' performance. The governors have set realistic targets for English and mathematics attainment from the coming years. The results for 1999 surpassed the targets set and showed a very marked improvement in standards in all three subjects. In English four-fifths of pupils achieved at least the average Level 4. All pupils gained Level 4 or better in mathematics and science; a fifth achieved the higher Level 5 in mathematics and a third in science.
 12. Inspection evidence shows that, by the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment in English
-

and mathematics is average and it is above average in science. There is a strength in speaking and

¹ Desirable Learning Outcomes are the goals set by the government for children by the time they reach five years old.

listening in English which is better than average, and in pupils' spelling. The current levels of attainment are similar to those identified in the previous inspection. Observations of lessons show there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and in the use of technical language, in science for example. The priority of raising reading standards is paying dividends as they have improved on recent years. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in religious education, judged largely on evidence from last year's written work, is well in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This however, is not as high as it was judged at the last inspection. Attainment in information technology is higher than expected of pupils of this age. Since the previous inspection, it has risen, due largely to the expertise of the present staff. In other subjects achievement is broadly as expected for pupils of this age.

13. At the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were considered to be average in English. Test data shows that after this standards dipped markedly for several years before improving. The pupils who are just starting Year 6, are achieving average standards and are on course to exceed the targets already set for them in national tests. In English, scrutiny of last year's work for Year 6, shows pupils achieve good accuracy in the technical skills of spelling and handwriting and writing at length is well developed and pupils use their imaginations to generate excitement in their prose. In the upper Key Stage 2 mixed age class, older pupils often complete work using commercial worksheets and this prevents them from using their own methods of recording. Generally, pupils' reading is well supported as books are graded to match attainment levels. In mathematics, last year, pupils undertook a good range and quantity of work. The depth of coverage of number work is in line with the numeracy strategy expectations. Opportunities were provided for pupils to explore how number patterns develop or to establish general rules for these observations. The scrutinised work matches well the standards which pupils achieved in tests. The present Year 6 are on course to achieve the targets set for them by the school.
14. Scrutiny of last year's work for Year 6 showed that pupils' factual knowledge in science is good. They have plenty of opportunity to use the processes of science in investigations, so the investigative and experimental aspect of the subject is in line with expectations for the end of the key stage. Pupils' attainment in information technology, at the end of the key stage, has improved from the below average standard, as seen in the last inspection, to in line with expectations now. Pupils are using a range of information technology programs regularly to ensure consistent improvement in these skills. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with that set out in the locally agreed syllabus. In history, design and technology and the elements of music and physical education seen, pupils' performance is as expected for their ages. In art and geography pupils are not performing as well as expected. This is largely due to a weakness in the progression of skills development as pupils move through the key stage.
15. In nearly six out of every ten lessons observed across the school pupils made at least good progress. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. The fact that they are mainly attaining average standards in end of key stage English tests, confirms this judgement. Good progress is apparent for those who need very high levels of support, for example at an early stage in their education. The small number of pupils who are using English as an additional language are also making good progress; a few are attaining better than their peers. Children under five make good progress overall and even in just three

days in school half are able to concentrate for a short while independently on English and mathematics tasks. At Key Stage 1, progress is good overall. At this key stage, in nine out of ten lessons seen, pupils made at least good progress. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, music and physical education at this key stage. Scrutiny of work from last year indicates they make sound progress in design and technology, art, history and geography.

16. At Key Stage 2, overall progress is satisfactory. It was good in a quarter of lessons observed. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics over time, judged largely on the range and quality of work seen from last year, is good. Progress in speaking and listening is good as is that in reading, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5. Progress in science is satisfactory, but older pupils have too little opportunity to gather and record data as part of their investigations which limits the quality of their work. Pupils' progress is sound in religious education. Pupils show a developing awareness of religious information but do not explore religious ideas and feelings sufficiently in lessons. Progress is satisfactory in information technology but older pupils do not yet use it to best advantage as a tool to enhance science and geography work. Little physical education was seen so it is not feasible to judge pupils' progress overall. However, school records show good progress in swimming with several pupils achieving long distances in awards schemes. There is satisfactory progress in design and technology, history, and the elements of music observed. Progress in art and geography is unsatisfactory as pupils have not been building up their skills step by step as they move through the key stage.
17. Pupils' sound literacy skills are enabling them to learn appropriately in other areas of the curriculum. The emphasis on using technical terms in mathematics and other subjects such as science, is promoting pupils' understanding. The use of literacy within the wider curriculum is good, for example, the high quality writing in history. The high standards of speaking and listening enrich the learning opportunities within class discussions generally. This was well demonstrated at Key Stage 1, where a pupil confidently explained how to use the school web-site; also in independent work at Key Stage 2, where pupils constructively discussed each other's writing. Numeracy skills are not used sufficiently in the wider curriculum. Pupils have some opportunities in geography to use their developing number skills to pinpoint and analyse temperatures on climate graphs. However, they are rarely required to analyse and interpret data and graphs in science or link this with information technology.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. This aspect is a strength of the school and has a very favourable impact on the standards pupils' achieve. It was also noted as a good feature at the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes are good. Behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Parents are pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes. There is an all pervading interest in all classrooms and the large majority of pupils sustain concentration well. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils' relationships with all adults and each other are very good. They are friendly and polite and maintain these appropriate relationships at playtime and lunchtime. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language being isolated in any way. Children under five, who only attend part-time, respond very positively to their work, showing good concentration and independence in class at this very early stage in their school careers. They listen well to the learning support assistant when she explains new activities to them. They take turns sensibly when playing games.
 19. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. The behaviour policy is implemented
-

consistently by all members of staff. Teachers use situations well to promote expected standards of behaviour. Pupils take care of their own property and use school resources with respect. Pupils listen with respect to one another for example when questions are being answered and work is read to the class. There have been no exclusions in the recent past.

20. Personal development is very good. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and carry out tasks with care. The scheme of work for personal development, and the circle time activities, effectively support pupils' development in this aspect. From an early age pupils are given responsibilities which increase from classroom duties to whole-school positions such as House Captains. A talent show offers opportunity for initiative, with pupils organising their acts and auditioning without adult help. Opportunities for visits, to places of interest and other schools, performing, collecting for charity and being aware of the sick and elderly, for example, when distributing Harvest Festival contributions, all aid personal development. Older pupils were seen working collaboratively and independently during the inspection in a very mature manner.

Attendance

- 20.
21. This continues to be satisfactory. The attendance rate in the last school year was broadly in line with the national average, while unauthorised absence in the same year was well below that of similar schools. Registration is conducted promptly and effectively and pupils answer politely. Pupils are punctual and lessons start and finish on time. Together attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Most parents observe the absentee procedure, and conform with requirements regarding the taking of holidays in term time.
- 21.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

21. **Teaching**
22. The quality of teaching is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2 where it was previously unsatisfactory. Across the school, 96 per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and over a half of the teaching is good or better. Almost a fifth of lessons seen were very well taught and there was one excellent lesson. There are variations in teaching quality between different parts of the school. Most of the very best teaching is for the under-fives and younger Key Stage 1 pupils. For example, teaching in over a half of lessons was very good or better for these pupils. Overall, at Key Stage 1, nine out of ten lessons were good or better. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. A quarter of the teaching was good at this key stage. There is a better picture of teaching at Key Stage 2 than that described in the last inspection, when many criticisms were raised about classroom management and organisation, which are now usually good. The relatively small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, one lesson, was within Key Stage 2. This lesson in religious education had subject material which did not challenge the thinking and ideas of older pupils sufficiently.
23. English teaching is good across the school. It is better than in 1996, due in part to recent training for planning and teaching the literacy hour. Mathematics teaching is also good overall and teachers are using the new numeracy strategy effectively. There is some high quality teaching of science, physical education, religious education, information technology and history at Key Stage 1. Other subjects are taught satisfactorily at both key stages. No examples of
-

teaching in design and technology and art were seen to assess how well it is taught overall.

24. The quality of teaching for children under five is good. Staff respond warmly to the children. Teachers, and the learning support assistant, use questions well to reinforce teaching points, as seen in a group activity led by the assistant where children played a game to guess the reading scheme characters. Planning for the areas of learning is thorough and gradually develops into the early stages of the National Curriculum. Short-term plans identify the learning which is intended and the assessment of children's progress is very effective.
 25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is effective. It ensures pupils make good progress. Pupils have suitable support from learning assistants, mainly in class, or in short withdrawal sessions. This help is usually to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Class teachers give support assistants suitable written instructions on how they are to assist pupils and the learning assistants respond with detailed notes on pupils' progress.
 26. Literacy is planned and taught in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy. The planning for this is effective. Literacy teaching is good across the school. Teachers tailor their teaching well to the needs of pupils. However, the wide age spread makes it harder for teachers to do this, so occasionally the use of commercial worksheets in upper Key Stage 2 is restricting older pupils' recording skills. Numeracy is also planned and taught in line with national initiatives. The structure of each lesson is carefully organised to provide a balance of mental mathematics, whole-class teaching and group tasks which are soundly matched to pupils' abilities in the very wide age range classes. Literacy often features well in other subjects, and information from other subjects is used in literacy lessons, but there is too little planned use of number in other subjects which is a weakness particularly in science and geography at Key Stage 2.
 27. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects are good overall at both key stages, with that for mathematics and science being very good at Key Stage 1. Across the school, teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are appropriate. At lower Key Stage 1, teachers have very high expectations of pupils which results in consistently good work being produced. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements.
 28. Teachers plan work thoroughly and share each lesson's purpose with pupils at its start. During the inspection, teachers provided high quality plans for individual lessons. More usually there is sound weekly planning which identifies lesson objectives and the range of activities, and requires teachers to make brief assessments of the outcomes to pinpoint the next steps in learning. Teachers usually structure lessons well and often give time targets so pupils know how long they have to complete work. In two instances, there were weaker elements in otherwise satisfactory teaching: direct teaching was slow paced in a geography lesson based on a story, where a few pupils become inattentive; in a history lesson, explanation of new work relied heavily on the teacher giving information, rather than involving pupils and using their ideas as well.
 29. Throughout the school the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is very good. All staff manage the pupils' behaviour very well. Discipline is usually unobtrusive yet effective. Class organisation and the teaching methods used are predominantly good, particularly at Key Stage 1. Teachers make good use of the learning resources available to them. For example, in a high quality English lesson at Key Stage 1 the teacher used a story on the Kent web-site as the book focus. Another useful feature at Key Stage 1 is the high quality
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activity sheets which teachers generate by computer. These are dated and have the learning objective for each lesson included. Marking is used as a tool to promote progress, and there is some specific target-setting in English, but it is used by some teachers to better effect than others. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In some classes there is excellent annotation identifying clearly how well pupils have succeeded with tasks. In other cases marking is affirming but not as strong in pointing to ways in which pupils might improve their work. Arrangements for homework are good and follow carefully laid down procedures. Younger pupils mainly practise basic skills in reading, spelling and number and this provides useful support to their work in class. Older pupils extend this with a wider range of written work and mathematics, including some research work.

The curriculum and assessment

30. The previous inspection report identified an unsatisfactory curriculum at Key Stage 2 with incomplete coverage of a number of subjects. Policies are now in place for all subjects, schemes of work are available to direct planning for all subjects except music and art; changes in staff, in service training and the development of the co-ordinators' roles in monitoring teaching and learning have all contributed to raising the standard of curriculum provision. It is now sound overall with strengths at Key Stage 1 and for the under-fives.
 31. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The headteacher and staff have developed a curriculum framework which promotes successfully pupils' physical, intellectual and personal development and prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education. A policy for health education gives sound guidance and includes provision for sex education and awareness of drug misuse. The school enriches the curriculum with regular French lessons for the oldest pupil. In addition even the youngest ones respond to the register in French. Swimming is a strong feature of the physical education curriculum. The curriculum for the children under five is well planned and enabling them to make good progress.
 32. The school is focusing strongly on raising standards of literacy and numeracy. The strategies in the initiatives for these aspects are securely in place and are already having positive impact. The amount of time designated to these subjects is appropriate. The National Grid for Learning, using information technology, has been introduced as an additional tool to raise standards. This is well established with the youngest pupils and team teaching and training is developing confidence throughout the school.
 33. The curriculum takes account of the wide variety of pupils' needs. The policy for special educational needs conforms to the Code of Practice and the staff are all familiar with procedures. Individual education plans have small step targets and these are taken into account when planning tasks in all subjects. The school provides a good level of support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and is successful in meeting their needs. Appropriate specialist advice is sought when required in order to adequately support those pupils with more complex needs. An equal opportunities policy supports good practice and all pupils have equal access to all parts of the curriculum.
 34. The school has been improving its curriculum organisation steadily over the last two years. The curriculum for under-fives is good and appropriately based in the six areas of learning, and eventually the early stage of the National Curriculum. Medium-term and short-term planning for these children is of high quality. Teachers precisely identify what learning is expected in
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each session. At Key Stage 1 and 2, schemes of work are available in all subjects except art and music and provide for a systematic development of key skills. All the staff plan together. Many opportunities are taken to discuss pupils' progress and pinpoint the most effective planning. However addressing the needs of the oldest pupils is still a challenge in some subjects, such as geography and art. The progression of skills development has not been clear in schemes and consequently there are gaps in the knowledge of older pupils. Excellent monitoring systems are in place which involve the headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors. These include monitoring classroom practice; this has yet to cover the whole curriculum, but plans for this are included in the school development plan.

35. A range of visitors help to enhance pupils' learning and sound use is made of the local area. The number and range of extra-curricular activities are very good. Sport is very well represented; two members of staff and parents and coaches lead these activities and most older pupils attend at least one activity. Some clubs are seasonal and include football and netball in competition with other schools, Study Club, dance, cycle training, art and athletics. The youngest pupils are included through the Willow Club, which is for environmental activities.
36. The school has a comprehensive assessment policy which gives suitable guidance to teachers. Assessment procedures are a major strength, very well thought out, owned by the whole staff, and they are put to very good use. Children's abilities are assessed during the first few weeks of schooling. Teachers consistently annotate these children's work in detail for assessment purposes. Detailed records of pupils' progress are kept in all subjects, with extra information gathered about English, mathematics and science. Objective assessment tests are used regularly in English and mathematics and very high quality analysis of the results is undertaken in order to plan strategies to raise standards and set targets. For example, focused teaching based on known weaknesses, in the booster classes and mathematics club, have improved literacy and mathematics standards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

37. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils with a particular strength in moral education. This makes an appropriate contribution to the quality of the pupils' education and the standards they achieve. This is a similar picture overall to that seen at the last inspection.
38. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are well planned and presented in a quiet and respectful atmosphere giving pupils opportunity to think about themselves, their friends and their school life. Under-fives are sensitively involved in this. Time for prayer and reflection features daily and a lighted candle aids pupils' concentration. Pupils learn the values and beliefs of the Christian faith, and of other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. These religions are successfully introduced through the celebration of various festivals, such as Saints' Days, Jewish festivals, and Diwali. A visit to Canterbury Cathedral enabled pupils to write about how the atmosphere in different parts of the church affected their feelings. Visits from the local vicar and a lay preacher from the Christian Community Church reinforce teaching. Music activities also offer good support to the spiritual aspect of the school. In a science lesson observed the teacher used a brief story with a spiritual dimension to focus pupils' interest on the theme.
39. The provision for moral development is very good and a strength of the school. It is strongly promoted by the caring ethos which is built upon respect for others. The behaviour policy is supported by the effective use of badges and certificates and also the monthly assembly at

which pupils and parents are able to celebrate achievement. Well chosen stories and ideas, introduced in assembly, promote moral values and pupils, even the youngest, have a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and are able to distinguish right from wrong.

40. The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school encourages pupils to relate effectively towards each other and form sound relationships. The youngest children under-five are carefully introduced to the appropriate ways of behaving and organising themselves in school. Opportunities for taking responsibility are offered to all pupils, the oldest taking some responsibility for the youngest pupils, for example at lunch time, and acting as House Captains. Sports day, a number of sporting clubs and visits to other schools for sporting and musical events contribute well to social development. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain understanding of the needs of others. They contribute to one significant charity a year, such as National Children's Homes Action for Children.
41. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture and heritage through the curriculum, visits to places of interest, book week and the opportunities to work with a poet and a sculptor. Work involving famous artists is undertaken. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that music played in assembly, in connection with the composer of the week, is well remembered and has broadened their knowledge. Multi-cultural awareness is being promoted through religious education, history and contributions made by pupils and parents, and this is an aspect which the staff are trying to develop further.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

42. This aspect has improved since the last inspection; it is now very good and a strength of the school. The school environment is happy, stimulating and supportive. Staff know the children very well. Pastoral care is a high priority and parents confirm their children are nurtured and given very effective support and advice across all aspects of school life. The sex education and drug policies, which are clear and well considered, are taught through the science curriculum, and supported by visits from the school nurse. Personal, social and health education is suitably integrated into the curriculum. Good work, effort, behaviour and politeness are recognised at assemblies to which parents are invited.
 43. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good. Assessment and monitoring of progress and attainment is very thorough with comprehensive year-group records and individual pupil's reading and homework cards and annual reports. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Planning targets are clearly focused and monitoring of progress is rigorous. There are good guidelines for identifying, motivating and challenging higher attaining pupils and the measures for monitoring the development in the under fives are very good.
 44. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are excellent and a major strength of the school. The disciplinary policy is excellent and procedures are very positive. They properly define expectations and standards and are supported by an appropriate and balanced range of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are rewarded for kindness, care and good behaviour. The policy has a sensible and sensitive section on bullying. Lunch-time procedures are exemplary with the emphasis on good manners, courtesy and social interaction. Tablecloths, flowers and table numbers help to
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enhance pupils' experience of lunch as an enjoyable social event. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good and another strength of the school. Clear procedures for absence and family holidays taken in term time are given in the prospectus and the school follows up any occasions when parents do not fully comply. Attendance registers do not always distinguish between some authorised and unauthorised absences, but otherwise comply with statutory requirements.

45. Procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' well being, health and safety are good. The school uses very good local authority guidelines on child protection, the child protection officer is designated, trained and known to staff and links are established with appropriate agencies. The health and safety policy is satisfactory, staff have good health and safety awareness and regular inspections are conducted. Hygiene and general cleanliness in the school are good. Play-times are well organised and suitable procedures are in place for supervising playground activities and wet weather play arrangements. The school has a designated medical room and the procedures for accidents, illness and medicines, both in school and on external visits, are good. All staff have basic first-aid training. The inspections of fire, electrical, and other equipment are in-date. Fire procedures are very good and innovative; emergency evacuation procedures are regularly practised. The procedures for taking attendance registers and the visitors' book to the emergency assembly point are being revised. The arrangements for storing and handling hazardous substances are correctly followed. Security measures are regularly reviewed.
 45. **Partnership with parents and the community**
 46. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. It is now very good and a strength of the school. The quality of information to parents is good. Communication includes consultations, meetings, parents' evenings, newsletters, assemblies and parents' notices. Suitable arrangements were made for parents to give their views on the new home-school agreement. The prospectus is well structured, easy to read and complies with statutory requirements. Pupils' reports are evaluative, explain progress in all subjects and note targets for improvement. Almost all parents answering the questionnaire and attending the parents' meeting are satisfied, with both the information the school gives them on the curriculum and with what they are told about their children's progress. The school has a good procedure for handling complaints and all parents find it easy to approach staff with problems and questions, and almost all believe the school handles complaints well.
 47. Parents' involvement in children's learning is very good and a major feature of the school. The school values the part parents and others play in the children's education and it encourages parents, grandparents and villagers to become involved in all aspects of school life. Parents confirm their involvement is strongly encouraged and they are made to feel very welcome. Many regularly support class, sporting and extra-curricular activities, open evenings, concerts and fund raising events. Parents of pupils with special educational needs discuss their educational plans with staff. The school has a good homework policy which is suitably structured to each year group. Pupils are given regular homework with which parents are asked to help. Holiday fun books are provided, homework records kept, and rewards are given to pupils for good homework. The School Association is flourishing and active in arranging a wide variety of fund raising and social events such as fairs, jumble sales and fireworks evenings.
 48. The school's induction and transfer arrangements are very good. There is a strong link with the
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local nursery and pre-school children visit the school for story sessions, activity afternoons and special events. The school has a good relationship with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. As well as academic exchanges, there are strong pastoral and social links too. This includes collaboration between the special educational needs co-ordinators and special induction days for pupils on the register of special educational need. There are sporting and musical links with several local schools, and very good relationships with local colleges from which it regularly accepts students on work experience. Pupils have a good appreciation of those who are more disadvantaged than themselves and sponsor activities to support local and national charities.

49. The enrichment of school life through links with the community is very good and another strength of the school. A wide variety of educational visits are to support historical, scientific and other topics. Among regular visitors to the school are police and fire officers, as well as local people with special knowledge and interests such as poetry, sculpture and travel. The Times Educational Supplement has featured the school in an article about young children using a web-site. The school is very well integrated into the village. It takes part in local events, invites villagers to school occasions like concerts and delivers presents to elderly residents at Harvest Festival and Christmas. School activities are reported in the village newsletter. Some cross-channel transport companies sponsor school events. The school's work is greatly enriched by its local contacts and community links contribute notably to pupils' progress, development and social experiences.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

50. The leadership and management of the school were reported as very good at the last inspection. Subsequently the school suffered turbulence in leadership and staffing and consequently for a time the school's roll fell markedly. Overall, the present leadership and management are now very good. The excellent leadership skills of the headteacher are at the core of this strength of the school. Her qualities and dedication are praised by parents, and are central to the school's drive to raise academic standards. A key issue at the last inspection was the need to clarify the management tasks of the deputy headteacher. In response, the governing body redefined the management structure; now the headteacher is supported by a senior teacher who has explicit, management responsibilities which are carried out appropriately. The whole staff team support the headteacher well and all are focused on improving the pupils' education.
 51. The range and depth of monitoring to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Its rigour has been instrumental in bringing about the recent improvements in standards. All teachers are thoroughly involved in evaluating the planning for the subjects they lead. The headteacher regularly observes teaching, judging its quality against agreed criteria. Staff work alongside each other whenever possible to share expertise. There has also been focused observation of new teaching initiatives such as the literacy hour. The headteacher, as mathematics co-ordinator, has also effectively managed the early introduction of the new national numeracy strategy. Samples of pupils' books are looked at frequently to moderate standards and analyse strengths and weaknesses in provision. The headteacher also discusses work with pupils and set individual targets for improvement. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages this provision effectively. All records are very thorough and kept up-to-date.
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52. The school benefits from having experienced governors in the roles of Chairman and Vice-chairman. They have helped to steer the school through the difficulties of the recent past. The governing body's terms of reference are very clearly defined in writing. Several committees focus on different aspects of its work. The curriculum committee is very involved in monitoring the school's curriculum developments. There is a regular programme of governors' visits to the school, and useful written reports are produced for the main governing body meetings. The governing body also discusses pupils' national assessment results and sets suitable targets for improvement. The school has a very good quality, detailed, development plan, prepared by the headteacher with staff assistance. It focuses appropriately on raising academic standards, particularly the national initiatives for literacy, numeracy and information technology. Where feasible it is carefully costed and there are clear criteria to judge success. The governing body is involved in discussing and analysing the plan but is not directly involved at the early stage of drawing it up. Forward planning for the present situation of a rapid increase in pupils is not formalised. It is a weakness that there is no strategic plan, or written evidence in minutes, to show how the governing body intends to deal with the issues posed by this situation.
52. The school's mission statement and published aims of providing a friendly, caring environment with a commitment to pupils' high achievement are being realised. The school's ethos is very good. Pupils behave very well and the relationships between staff and pupils are very warm. Pupils are treated fairly, with no distinction based on gender or race observed. The school provides a good quality act of daily collective worship which fully meets statutory requirements. Other statutory matters are dealt with appropriately with the exception of the annual governors' report to parents. It is concise, but it has a large number of omissions, notably about pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and attendance rates, so does not give an adequate picture of the school. In the past two years the school has clearly forged ahead and ensured good improvement since the last inspection, both in the key issues identified then, and in the drive to raise academic standards. There is a very good insight into what needs to be done, and openness to new ideas, in the present staff team which indicates that the school has a very good capacity for further improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

53. These features are satisfactory overall, with several very good features but some weaker ones. The matching of teachers to the school's needs is very good and a strength of the school. All teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to meet the requirements of the curriculum and teach it effectively, including educating the under-fives. The headteacher has a part-time teaching commitment and also supports focus groups of older pupils. Comprehensive job descriptions have been drawn up for all staff, and co-ordinators are designated for all subjects, as well as special educational needs. The matching of support staff to the under-fives and pupils' special educational needs is good. Their numbers, and experience make them well able to meet the demands of the role. Their responsibilities complement those of the teachers with whom they work closely in planning, supporting, and recording pupils' progress. The school secretary and caretaker are diligent and efficient. The lunch-time supervisors work well together during the lunch meal and in the play area.
54. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good and a strength of the school. Staff training is very well planned, co-ordinated and recorded, and suitably reflects priorities in the school development plan, individual staff needs and available funding. Training is identified and costed in the school development plan. Much of the training, which
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includes support staff as well as teachers, is undertaken jointly with local primary and secondary schools. Literacy, numeracy and information technology have been recent priorities. Those attending external courses share the information with other staff during meetings. There are good procedures in place for the induction of new staff, including mentoring, training and visits to other schools. A very helpful handbook is issued to all staff and supply teachers explaining school policies and routines. The school has a very good appraisal policy which is effective in helping staff evaluate and improve their practice.

55. Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory for the effective delivery of the curriculum. These weaknesses are becoming more apparent since the recent increase in the number on roll, especially in the class for older pupils. The classroom for these pupils is small, which creates difficulties for group and practical work, and it has only one exit. The hall is too small to meet their full physical education requirements under the National Curriculum, and this matter was criticised at the last inspection. These unsatisfactory features make teaching more difficult and restrict the older pupils' quality of learning. The school consists of a main building with five smaller buildings set round a large attractive play area. There is a good sized adjoining playing field and small wildlife area and pond. Play areas are safe and secure and well marked for play activities, although there is no separate secure area for the under-fives which is a weakness. Storage space is adequate, but at a distance from the teaching areas, in a temporary building, and so is not easily accessible. The demountable classrooms have sinks but the outside pipes often freeze in winter. The staff and medical rooms, converted from an air-raid shelter, are very damp. The school environment benefits from a wide range of interesting and colourful displays and the balance between the celebration of pupils' work and teaching aids is good.
56. Learning resources are satisfactory overall for the needs of the curriculum. There has been recent expenditure on literacy, numeracy and information technology resources, to support development priorities. The small non-fiction library has a limited range of books and is being re-developed; some books for research and literacy activities are also held in classes and the special educational needs room. Older pupils use the library area readily for independent work. The sufficiency and quality of information technology equipment is very good and the ratio of pupils to computers is above the national average. Of the other subjects, physical education, design and technology and music resources are good, while those for geography and religious education are inadequate. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good. Curriculum work is supported very well by specialist visitors such as poets, sculptors and theatre groups, and by educational visits to such places as museums and environmental centres.

The efficiency of the school

57. Financial planning is good. As a small school the funding required is typically above the national average. Proportionally the school's spending on teaching and support staff is below average. Most other areas of the school's spending are close to the expected level, such as expenditure on resources. Well above average proportions of the budget are allocated to administration and caretaking. This is an efficient use of funds in both instances. For example, the school secretary has a front-line role in dealing with parents, visitors and day-to-day financial matters, and this is particularly valuable as the headteacher is teaching for much of the week.
 58. The budget-setting system is well organised and the governing body's finance committee is fully involved in this. The Chairman of Governors regularly monitors the school's expenditure with
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the headteacher and reports to the governing body. The school has managed its finances prudently in the recent past and has maintained a suitable level of budget surplus. Funds provided for special initiatives in literacy and information technology have been spent wisely on new books and hardware. The school also makes good use of the money provided for pupils with special educational needs by employing support staff. In addition it spends a further amount from the main budget for this support.

59. The school makes good use of the available teaching and support staff. For instance, team teaching in information technology and focused teaching of small groups of older pupils to raise standards in English and mathematics. The accommodation is used satisfactorily; for example staff use the hall and special educational needs room to enable them to gather pupils together for whole-class literacy teaching, something which is not possible in two of the classrooms. However, in other subjects not enough consideration has been given to how the high numbers of pupils in the small upper Key Stage 2 classroom can be enabled to undertake practical tasks. Too little use is made of the dining room for this. Available resources are used suitably, particularly the new books and resources for literacy and numeracy.
 60. Financial control is good. The school administrator is well organised and has developed suitable systems to ensure financial transactions are checked and balanced. At the previous inspection the management of finances was considered to have weaknesses. The local authority, audited the school's financial systems last academic year and found only a few matters for improvement. This key issue has been effectively addressed.
 61. Most pupils enter the school with average attainment for their age. Teaching is good overall, and the academic standards are rising because of the action taken by the headteacher and staff. There is a very good ethos in this very well managed school. The school is more expensive than average due to its size but the other strong features mean the school provides good value for money.
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PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

62. Children under five may start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthday. Initially they attend school on a part-time basis so that they can be gradually introduced to school routines. Most of the children have attended pre-school before starting in reception. Children's abilities are assessed during the first few weeks of schooling. This information, over the past two years, indicates that most have social, language and mathematical skills which are average in comparison with other children of this age in Kent. At the time of inspection ten children under five had just started school in the mornings only. Scrutiny of work undertaken by children under five last year shows they made good progress. Most achieved or surpassed the expected standards for language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development, but physical development could not be judged. This judgement is similar to that made in the last inspection.

Personal and social development

63. This aspect of the children's development is very good. They respond very positively to their work, showing good concentration and independence in undertaking tasks at such an early stage in their school lives. They are co-operative with each other and the support assistant. They are learning the class routines quickly and building on their pre-school experience. The very warm relationships being forged with staff contribute significantly to the children's spiritual, moral and social development.

Language and literacy

64. Literacy attainment by five is above average, children last year made good progress and a particular strength is the development of reading skills. Literacy is given priority with regular sessions reading 'big books' together. Children understand that print carries meaning, and use picture clues to help them explain stories and read. Scrutiny of work from last year shows children are able to use their good knowledge of initial sounds to write words and short sentences and are aware of when to use capital letters and fullstops, and in some instances exclamation marks. The teachers provide the present under-fives with high quality activities and pupils are confident when talking to their support assistant about these. In a game they were capable of framing questions about reading scheme characters to guess who they were. Most already recognise a few letters and their sounds.

Mathematics

65. Children's attainment by five last year was well in line with that expected for this age group and the children made good progress. Scrutiny of work showed they were confident in recognising numbers to ten and are capable of ordering these practically. Most add and subtract practically, with numbers below ten, and a few are capable of working with higher numbers. They experience a good range of practical activities and number games to consolidate their understanding of number and shapes. They recognise colours and plane shapes readily and match these to make patterns. The present under-fives are counting to five and matching figures to the appropriate number of items. They made good progress in the lesson observed.
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Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. The curriculum is suitably planned to give children a wide range of opportunities to learn about the world around them. Their knowledge, as seen in the work scrutiny, in this aspect is generally good and they have made good progress. Practical opportunities are provided to explore scientific ideas. They have spent time finding living things and sorting these into plants and animals, learned about different materials, and how to make a light bulb light in a circuit. They have looked at different parts of the school and made simple plans, and compared old and modern vehicles such as bicycles. Excellent use is made of information technology programs to reinforce the children's knowledge in literacy and other subjects. Children's skills are more advanced than usually found for this age group.

Creative development

67. Children have average attainment in this aspect and make satisfactory progress. They experience creative activities in a range of materials including paint, malleable materials and with construction kits. They experiment with printing and learn to mix colours. Their designs for the classroom blinds were interesting and they had the opportunity to talk to the teacher about their ideas and what they could improve. They are confident at drawing shapes, such as triangle and circles and produce quite detailed, carefully coloured drawings. Those seen working practically were able to use scissors properly. Most artistic, creative activities are closely controlled and opportunities for pupils to explore colour, texture and shape independently and imaginatively are less apparent. No music activities were observed in the inspection. A role-play area is available and its focus is changed several times during the year. However at the time of the inspection it was not a particularly dramatic feature in the classroom.

Physical development

68. It is not possible to make a judgement on this area of learning as no physical activities were seen. The new under-fives are using pencils, crayons and scissors appropriately. The school has no secure outdoor area for these children to use in good weather, nor any big wheeled toys, which are weaknesses in provision.

Quality of teaching and the curriculum

69. The reception class provides appropriately equipped and interesting areas for purposeful play and successful learning. The quality of teaching is good overall, with very good teaching observed in several lessons. Teachers' very good knowledge of what to expect from this age group and high quality skills of questioning are strengths. A further strength is the excellent marking of children's work and the annotation which closely analyses their progress in each activity. There is good support from the learning assistant. The curriculum is good and appropriately based in the six areas of learning, and eventually the early stage of the National Curriculum. Medium-term and short-term planning is high quality. Teachers precisely identify what learning is expected in each session.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

70. At the last inspection the standards pupils achieved, at both key stages, were judged to be mainly average with a strength in reading. An analysis of national test results since then, at both key stages for 1996-1998, indicates a dip in standards during this period to well below average overall. The small numbers of pupils in each cohort and the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs have a partial bearing on these lower standards. For example, in 1998 almost all pupils age 11 were on the special educational needs register, with two having Statements of Special Educational Need. Two-thirds of these pupils achieved the average Level 4 which was close to national figures, but none gained the higher Level 5.
71. Two years ago the new headteacher identified elements of underachievement, for example in reading, which have been made a focus of school improvement. In the 1999 national test results, at Key Stage 1, 92 per cent of pupils reached the expected Level 2 standard in reading and writing. However, only a few achieved the higher Level 3. At Key Stage 2, 80 per cent of pupils gained at least the expected Level 4 standard, ten per cent achieve Level 5. A particular strength was the writing standard, as 80 per cent of pupils reached at least Level 4. The marked improvement in standards is attributable to the focus on English. This includes the introduction of whole-school planning, monitoring of classroom practice, the introduction of the literacy hour, the excellent assessment procedures and the very good use of information to target weaknesses.
72. At this very early stage in the academic year pupils' attainment in English is predicted to be close to average at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1 the improvement seen in the 1999 tests is likely to be maintained. At Key Stage 2, the present Year 6 has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, several at higher stages of the register. The school is likely to achieve its targets for the group, but the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 will be small.
73. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in developing their skills for speaking and listening and standards are good. Most pupils express themselves clearly in the many opportunities provided for them in lessons. They read their work aloud to the class confidently, are willing to answer questions and discuss their work with visitors. Year 2 pupils discuss happy and sad feelings and respond well with a variety of suggestions. Year 6 pupils discuss with confidence what makes a cliff hanger in a story. Listening skills are particularly strong in lessons and in daily collective worship.
74. Pupils' attainment in reading, by the end of both key stages, is broadly average, and assessment data shows it was above average for last year's Year 6. Progress is good at both key stages. Appropriate reading strategies are developed as pupils move through the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, they have developed suitable methods including phonics, to recognise and read unfamiliar words quite confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read accurately using a variety of texts including fiction and non-fiction. When reading aloud many pupils make an effort to establish characters by expression. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 make particularly good progress as a result of the strategies the school has put in place to raise standards. Older pupils have a sound understanding of non-fiction books and show a preference to use these when asked to choose a book. All are aware of the function of an index. Some older pupils visit the public library with parents.
75. Attainment in writing at both key stages is average and pupils make sound progress overall.
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Work scrutiny demonstrates that the recent policies to improve handwriting and spelling are effective and good progress was made last year. The youngest pupils develop a correct pencil grip. Handwriting is taught and practised regularly in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils have achieved an attractive cursive style. Year 1 pupils, working on a history task, copy write or complete sentences. Year 2 pupils work independently, write simple sentences and use full stops and capital letters appropriately. They use their phonic skills well to aid spelling. Scrutiny of work shows writing for a variety of purposes including stories, poems and opportunity for sequencing events, such as in "A Day in the Life of a Baby". At Key Stage 2, pupils have a good range of writing opportunities. These include poems, book reviews, letters, news bulletins and story writing. Opportunities for writing at length are well developed. Year 5 pupils identify various strategies used to interest the reader, they read three different texts and discuss the different styles of language and the ideas of the writers. Pupils' stories indicate that they are developing good story-writing skills, writing at length, in chapters and enjoying using their imagination to generate excitement. Presentation of work is consistently good at Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2 but more variable at the later stages of Key Stage 2.

76. The school successfully identifies pupils with special educational needs and provides good support. Pupils with reading and writing difficulties make good progress overall. These pupils are included in all activities and appropriate questioning allows them to be involved in all discussions. The support assistants are well directed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teachers. These staff are very capable in supporting pupils' reading and writing and ensuring progress to the targets set in individual education plans. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are enabled by appropriate support to work with success among their peers.
 77. Pupils are very well motivated, interested and persevere with their tasks and listen to the advice which teachers give. They work well with partners, in groups and individually. A group of Year 6 pupils read their stories to one another in turn in order to identify mistakes and discuss the success of the content. They worked in the library in a very mature manner enjoying the independence. In all lessons pupils care well for books and equipment.
 78. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and teachers are confident in the subject. Pupils are managed well and teachers value pupils' work as seen in the work displayed. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are always reinforced during plenary sessions. The literacy hour structure is used well. Whole-class text sessions are well organised and in two classes pupils are taken into other rooms to ensure sufficient space is available for all pupils to sit comfortably. Introductions are relevant and purposeful and the pace is good. At Key Stage 1 and the early stages of Key Stage 2, work sheets are made for individual pupils which are carefully matched to their needs and aid their progress. There is some over-use of commercial worksheets for older pupils which at times inhibits progress and does not aid recording or reinforce presentation skills. Key Stage 1 pupils are benefiting from the teaching of literacy through information technology.
 79. The co-ordinator is experienced and well supported by the headteacher. A wide range of changes have been inaugurated in the past 18 months: the introduction of planning linked to the National Literacy Strategy; the monitoring of plans and children's work; setting targets; monitoring teaching; moderating work; the very high quality analysis of assessment information and the action taken and the introduction of the literacy hour, are all having a positive impact on raising standards in English. Parents are invited to contribute to pupils'
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progress through the initiative "Extending Reading Skills". Home/school link books demonstrate this is successful. Annual reports for English are detailed and identify new targets for individuals.

80. A good variety of new books have been purchased to support literacy initiatives. The limited non-fiction library suffered water damage recently and is now being redeveloped. In some subjects, such as geography and religious education the selection of books is dated. The school is committed to raising standards of literacy and has devoted a high percentage of teaching time to the subject. In addition there is a good contribution to literacy throughout the curriculum. Scrutiny of work and displays demonstrate a written element in most subjects. Pupils are aware of the importance of reading and writing as a means of acquiring knowledge and communication.
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Mathematics

81. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages, judged on inspection evidence, is similar to national averages. At the last inspection, attainment was at an average level. National tests show the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above, at the end of Key Stage 1, was similar to the national average in the past two years, but few pupils achieved the higher Level 3. The school has had a trend of rising standards for Key Stage 1 mathematics over the past few years. Boys' and girls' attainment did not vary significantly.
 82. National test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have fluctuated considerably over the past four years, but until 1999 the results were always below the national average. The fluctuations are to some extent linked to the ability profiles of the small cohorts in the school. Thus in 1998, when standards were particularly low, there were fewer than ten pupils in the year group and almost all were on the special educational needs register. In 1999, there was a sharp increase in standards. All the pupils attained at least the average Level 4 with a fifth gaining the higher Level 5. There was no significant variation in the attainment of girls and boys.
 83. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are successfully developing their own strategies for problem solving. They add and subtract confidently and can identify and use halves and quarters. They can also name and describe the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes, and sort objects using a variety of classifications. When measuring they are starting to use standard units for length and time. They understand place value to 100 and carry out simple multiplication and division calculations using their two, five and ten times tables, as well as addition and subtraction. They can also extract and interpret information from graphs.
 84. At the end of Key Stage 2, scrutiny of the work of last year's pupils shows they could use all four operations of computation up to tens of thousands, and calculate using decimal notation to two places. They calculate fractions and percentages of quantities. They use multiplication facts up to 10×10 and recognise patterns in the multiplication process. Pupils can construct two and three-dimensional shapes, using accurate or scale drawing, recognise symmetry and find the area and volume of simple shapes. They collate and present data using a variety of different types of graph but do not use the computer to record data-handling results which is a weakness and something criticised also at the last inspection. The present Year 6 are on target to reach or exceed the school's predictions for their attainment.
 85. Pupils' numeracy skills are being developed well in mathematics' lessons. This includes a reasonable range of number investigations and challenges, such as one observed where pupils had to multiply high numbers faster than a partner using their own choice of strategy. This work in investigation is an improvement since the last inspection. However, it is a weakness that there is limited planning for the use of numeracy in other subjects and few examples were seen in the samples of work in science and geography from last year. As pupils progress they have a growing sense of number size, systems, and facts. They are learning to calculate accurately and efficiently both mentally and with pencil and paper. They use correct terminology when explaining their findings, thereby assisting literacy skills. The school identified that pupils needed more practise in multiplication skills and has established achievement certificates for this which are popular with pupils and parents.
 86. Pupils make good progress, in all aspects of mathematics, from year to year, as seen in the large quantity of good quality, varied work completed in each year group last year. This good progress is closely linked to the high quality curriculum organised by the headteacher and
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based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This new curriculum was a key factor in improved attainment last year. In the last inspection the progress of some pupils in the top class was judged to be too slow, this has now been remedied. Assessment procedures are very well organised and test results carefully analysed to enable teachers to pinpoint where pupils are making least progress and to deal with this. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported in lessons by learning assistants who discuss the work with them and, if needed, assist them with recording. At the last inspection younger pupils were judged to record their work well but older ones recording was weak. Now older pupils record their work tidily with neat figures.

87. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are good. They listen attentively, sustain concentration, and work hard to complete tasks. A few pupils in lower Key Stage 2 were a little insecure in tasks they were expected to do, having forgotten concepts during the long holiday. Pupils work well on their own and in pairs. Older ones showed lots of enthusiasm for their multiplication challenge and did not want to stop at the end of the session.
 88. Teaching is good overall. The previous inspection reported that the quality of teaching was good for younger pupils and this is maintained. Numerous criticisms were made of the teaching of older pupils; this has now improved. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and good relationships with pupils. Lesson planning is thorough. The mixed age and mixed key stage classes mean teachers have to match work to a wide range of abilities which is very demanding. They rise to this challenge. Teachers are competent in using questions to check and extend pupils' mathematical understanding. However, in one whole-class section of a lesson the older pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes were not fully challenged by the content. The classroom for the oldest pupils is small and the recent increase in the numbers of pupils makes it very difficult for the teacher to move freely around the room to monitor pupils' work. Marking at Key Stage 1 is excellent with careful annotation of how well pupils have understood the learning objective. Marking at Key Stage 2 is affirming and regular but less analytical or useful for assessment purposes. At Key Stage 1 there are useful displays linked to daily number tasks, such as counting how many pupils will be having lunch. Homework is used well at both key stages to improve pupils' skills.
 89. The school has recognised the importance of raising mathematics attainment and responded to the challenge in several ways. The new numeracy strategy was introduced earlier than required and new materials were purchased. The policy, scheme and assessment tracking books all link well to the numeracy strategy, and all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, is very effective in leading the subject; by monitoring teaching and planning, and by supporting colleagues. Older pupils are targeted for focused teaching in small groups. There is also a popular mathematics club to extend pupils' skills. Resources are satisfactory but many have to be stored at some distance from classes, which limits accessibility.
 90. **Science**
 90. In the last inspection pupils were judged to be achieving good standards at the end of Key Stage 1 but achievement was unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has recently successfully worked to rectify the weaknesses at Key Stage 2. Up until 1998 the national test results were consistently well below the national average at Key Stage 2. Under the guidance of a new teacher, last year, all pupils achieved at least the average Level 4 and a third gained the higher Level 5; overall, better than the recently published national averages. At the end of Key Stage 1, teachers' assessments in 1999, and in the previous year, judged more pupils to be gaining the expected standard than was the case nationally, or in schools of a similar type.
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However, fewer than average achieved the higher Level 3 standard. At this very early stage in the academic year, the current Year 2 and Year 6 are mainly attaining average standards.

91. Scrutiny of last year's work, from Key Stage 1, reveals that pupils made good progress during the year in the variety of work they undertook and the depth to which ideas were studied. They were given plenty of experience of simple investigations. In recording these they showed they were beginning to use prediction and to understand how a fair test is carried out. For example, they devised their own investigations to test the strength of plastic bottles and discovered how materials alter by making some butter from milk. Literacy skills are used effectively; for instance, after a visit to a local environmental centre pupils' writing showed they had gained a valuable amount of knowledge about creatures which lived in water. Good progress was also observed in a lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils who were examining the many colours of flowers and leaves. Close support was offered to individuals with special educational needs enabling equally good progress.
 92. At Key Stage 2, samples of the work from last year's Year 6 confirm the test results of high standards and shows they made good progress over the year. Most of their work was undertaken through investigations showing a good understanding of the processes involved in this. Average and above average pupils produced high quality observational drawings and written comment. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection where pupils were found to have little recorded work. A weakness though is that the analysis of results rarely used numeracy skills, information technology, or hand drawn graphs. For instance, in an investigation on germination the recording strategy for a high attaining Year 6 pupils and an average Year 5 pupil was the same, restricting the opportunity for gathering, analysing and displaying data in a more mature fashion. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 made good progress in an initial lesson on electricity. They used mathematical Venn diagrams to analyse whether appliances needed or did not need electricity. The group discussions were sensible and pupils found several examples which fell into both categories. With a wide spread of age and ability in the class the teacher made sure that different ability and age groups recorded work in different ways, enabling pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
 93. Pupils have sound attitudes overall to science. Younger pupils particularly show great interest and enjoyment during investigations and collaborate well in groups. There is less of a sense of enthusiasm and spirit of curiosity in the older pupils. The small size of their classroom, and the number of pupils it contains, hampers collaborative group investigations and consequently activities are not as exciting for pupils as they could be. This has an impact on their level of interest. Only a few were keen to venture ideas about how the temperature of water might cool. In contrast they write up notes quickly and carefully, with suitable attention to the quality of the finished result.
 94. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2; it is particularly strong in lower Key Stage 1. Lessons are carefully planned with focused learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the start of each session. There is a strong emphasis on practical experience and unusual resources are provided to kindle pupils' interest, for example the special contact strips which made it easy for the youngest pupils to collect different colours of flowers and leaves. In this lesson too the teacher carefully reinforced the safety message on hand washing after touching plants. A strength is the teachers' knowledge of the subject and the way they extend pupils' thinking with skilful questioning, as was seen in the lesson on electricity. Teachers promote the correct use of scientific language which has a positive impact on literacy skills. Opportunities were missed in two investigations at Key Stage 2 for precise
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measurements of water to be made, so as to enhance the accuracy of the tests and enable the oldest pupils to use data-handling recording methods. Marking is of a very high quality at Key Stage 1, identifying pupils' success in the tasks. It is sound at Key Stage 2 but less analytical. Assessment procedures focus clearly on pupils' progress.

95. A good scheme of work, based on recent national guidance, underpins the curriculum. It identifies clear objectives and ensures progression in learning. Teachers have a satisfactory variety of resources to support pupils' learning. Management of the subject was considered weak at the last inspection, this is not the case now. Key Stage 1 pupils benefit from an extra-curricular environmental club and about half attend regularly.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

96. In the last inspection the standards pupils attained were considered to be low, and progress was slow as pupils did not often use computers. Since then there has been a sound improvement. Scrutiny of last year's work shows attainment above the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1, and at the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 2. Key Stage 1 pupils are using computers with a high degree of confidence and independence and make good progress in improving their skills. This was demonstrated with great aplomb by a Year 1 pupil who explained the school's web-site. She used the mouse to control the screen cursor with speed and accuracy, and knew which icons and parts of the menus to click on to show further screens of information. Her verbal explanation of how to use the web-site was very mature. Photographs and work in books show pupils, including those with special educational needs, have experienced various devices and programs to develop their control and communication skills, but to a lesser extent data-handling skills. For example, in English they have written short poems; for display purposes they have changed the fonts, sizes and colours, and occasionally have added pictures from a clip art selection.
97. Discussions with several Year 6 pupils confirm they have made sound progress in the past year in systematically developing their skills in information technology. They are confident and secure in explaining how to use communication programs, and the activities they have experienced in control when using super-logo. They can explain how to use a digital camera but have less experience of data handling. These pupils are confident in finding and loading programs and retrieving information which has been stored in the computer system, each has a disk for work. Word-processing skills support literacy development appropriately. Pupils can explain how to alter fonts, print size and colours, and how to move text and pictures around the screen.
98. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are good. Those seen using computers independently concentrated appropriately. Good quality teaching was observed at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 where the pupils were carefully taught how to enter text and use the icons in a new computer program. A strength is the arrangements the school has made for a very skilled co-ordinator to team teach with other staff to help them improve their knowledge of programs. The use of a story text from Kent Schools' Key Stage 1 web-site, which has been developed by the school's co-ordinator in conjunction with the advisory service, is an exciting use of technology in literacy. Activities to develop information technology are planned regularly, but these do not yet support work sufficiently in subjects other than English. Very high quality assessment annotations are made on printed copies of pupils' work.
99. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, and also of the headteacher, is a key factor in the improvement of information technology provision in the school. New national initiatives and funds from the Parents' Association have enabled the purchase of new computers and other hardware, and an internet link. Resources are very good for a small school. A new scheme has been written, based on recent national guidance, to ensure that skills in all the strands of the subject are taught systematically. A detailed action plan for improvement is being followed with great thoroughness.

Religious education

100. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the locally agreed syllabus for religious
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education. This is an improvement at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when standards were found to be unsatisfactory. Attainment is not as high as it was judged then at Key Stage 1 when standards were found to be above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. At Key Stage 1, pupils are developing an awareness of themselves and are able to articulate their feelings in different situations. Year 1 pupils talk and write about their feelings in the dark. Scrutiny of work shows an understanding of what 'special' means in terms of people and things. They gain an awareness of other faiths, for instance, in their work on a synagogue. A visit to Canterbury Cathedral produced a variety of work including describing their feelings in different parts of the building. Work on growing up demonstrates an appreciation of change in the human condition, and some pupils show a knowledge of the challenges that lay ahead.

101. At the end of Key Stage 2, scrutiny of work demonstrates the sound understanding that pupils have of other faiths. They know Bible stories carry meaning and offer lessons for life. Year 3 pupils discuss feelings, such as happy and sad. They offer many examples and understand the effect these experiences have on the whole family. Older pupils study the story of David and Goliath. They discuss the Old Testament and are aware of the connections between Christian and Jewish religion. However, pupils' books indicate that there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to discuss religious ideas, and the effect that beliefs have on the way people live. Other evidence of the range of religious education is drawn from photographs of Christmas and Easter activities, information about visits from the local vicar, the use of pupils and parents from other ethnic origins who talk to pupils and show religious artefacts. Literacy skills are used well in the subject and pupils with special educational needs are actively involved in all lessons.
102. Teaching in religious education is sound overall; one very good lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 but an unsatisfactory one was seen at Key Stage 2. When teaching is very good activities are organised very well and there are opportunities for pupils to share ideas. Written tasks are matched well for all abilities and there is good use of artefacts or illustrations to reinforce and add interest. When teaching is unsatisfactory the content of the lesson is too limited and does not challenge the oldest pupils, discussion does not extend pupils' understanding of religious ideas and there is no use of resources to add interest. Pupils respond well to lessons and are willing to share their ideas. They are always attentive.
103. The school has some Jewish and Hindu artefacts and a number of Bibles but resources are inadequate overall. The scheme of work has been implemented effectively since the last inspection. The local authority is reviewing the syllabus at present and the school awaits further instructions before continuing to develop its current assessment procedures.

Art

104. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work, at Key Stage 1, indicates that they are developing appropriate skills. They produce work in a variety of different media and are developing suitable skills in drawing, cutting, painting and some three dimensional work is seen. Generally progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. However, evidence suggests that these skills are not built on systematically as pupils move through Key Stage 2, so standards are below those usually seen for pupils of this age and progress is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 2, there is no evidence of skills' progression, and discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils reveals inadequate knowledge of colour mixing. Work is activity based and fails to focus on extending previously learned skills. Those pupils spoken to enjoy

art. They have recently benefited from working with a sculptor and produced gargoyles in clay which are carefully executed and of a sound standard. Some famous European artists are studied and older pupils enjoy the art club.

105. The previous report criticised the lack of a policy and scheme of work, the underachievement at Key Stage 2 and the lack of sketch books. Apart from the policy these matters have not been addressed adequately and art remains a weak subject in the curriculum. A co-ordinator is now in post but the subject has yet to be thoroughly monitored. The school development plan indicates a scheme of work is to be prepared next year. Resources include prints, books and resource packs for teachers, however, overall resources are limited.

Design and technology

106. No lessons were observed in design and technology during the inspection. Evidence from pupils' books, and talking to Year 6 pupils suggest that achievement is similar to that found in most schools, at both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
107. The principles of designing, listing materials and tools required, sequencing the process, modifying, testing and evaluating are well established at Key Stage 1 and continue to be built on at Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils talked about the buggies they designed, powered by elastic bands; they described using a variety of tools. Scrutiny of books shows regular work which builds on previously learned skills.
108. The previous report made numerous criticisms of the co-ordination and organisation of the subject, judging that it did not meet National Curriculum requirements. For example, little work was recorded with insufficient evidence of designing or evaluating outcomes, and pupils had few opportunities to use tools. Now a co-ordinator is responsible for the subject and is soundly developing her role. The scheme of work is suitably skills based and gives sound guidance for each year group and assessment is good. Resources for the subject are good. There is considerable improvement since the last inspection.

Geography

109. In the last inspection pupils were judged to be achieving satisfactorily for their abilities. Just one geography lesson was observed on this inspection and judgements are mainly based on work samples from last year and a discussion with several Year 6 pupils. At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is satisfactory and the work they are undertaking is at the level expected for their age. However, the curriculum which Key Stage 2 pupils followed in the past was not sufficiently well planned to ensure they systematically learned an appropriate range of geography skills. Consequently pupils have gaps in their knowledge and their progress has dipped to unsatisfactory. The headteacher and staff identified this deficiency last year. To remedy it the co-ordinator has devised a new, satisfactory curriculum plan, based on national guidance, which the school is starting to use from this term.
110. At Key Stage 1, younger pupils study the school and its grounds and carefully record simple plans as the earliest stage of map making. Older pupils in the key stage build on these skills by finding countries such as China on a world map, but little other map making is apparent. They have made some comparisons of life here and in China and presented their findings informatively in writing. Some general geographical knowledge of pupils in Year 3 is sound,
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as instanced when they recognised where Scotland was on the map of Great Britain. Work scrutiny shows older pupils studied weather including wind patterns, climate charts and the water cycle last year. When this was discussed with several, their understanding of these matters, and associated technical language, was limited; for example when discussing weather measurements they did not know the temperature of freezing point. In work on China pupils had the benefit of an e-mail link with someone in that country, whereby they gathered information about lifestyles. However, the recording and depth of this work was no better for Year 6 than it was for Year 3, pointing to a weakness in progression. There is no evidence that older pupils have been expected to sift information from different sources to produce an up-to-date picture of life in a contrasting locality. Pupils have not been building on the skills established at Key Stage 1 as they move through Key Stage 2 and this is unsatisfactory.

111. The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. A good link was made with literacy as a familiar story book was used to identify man-made and natural landscape features. However, the most was not made of this to emphasise geographic words such as bay and cliff. Most pupils listened reasonably attentively and were able to use the knowledge gained to complete a written task. Resources and books for geography research are limited and older pupils do not experience field-work activities.
 112. **History**
 112. The last inspection judged that pupils at both key stages were achieving satisfactorily for their abilities. In this inspection two lessons were observed and samples of pupils' work from last year were studied. Pupils are continuing to achieve at the levels expected for their ages, and make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
 113. During Key Stage 1, younger pupils make comparisons of transport and shopping between today and the last century; for example they produced some detailed pictures of penny-farthing bicycles as compared to modern ones. They hear stories about famous people and are beginning to appreciate the part these played in history. For instance, a visit to Canterbury Cathedral was the stimulus for drawing and writing about the death of Thomas Becket. A strength which is promoting sound progress at both key stages is the various visits pupils make linked to history. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 studied Tudor times, after a visit to Dover Castle, and used their literacy skills effectively to write about life in those times.
 114. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in building up their knowledge of time past and ancient cultures. In some imaginative writing, which linked well with work in literacy, pupils wrote newspaper style reports on the latest fashions in Roman clothes. Pupils have opportunities to undertake research of their own. Those spoken with talked enthusiastically about how the Romans built roads and knew of one such locally.
 115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and very good teaching was observed in lower Key Stage 1. Here, the teacher's questions were very well thought out and involved all the pupils in a discussion which was setting the scene for future work on houses. A spiritual dimension was also introduced by exploring how a house becomes a home. In contrast in a weaker element in a satisfactory lesson, introducing pupils to the 1930s, the discussion was not focused enough on the key points the teacher wished to make. The history curriculum framework has a suitable coverage of history topics at both key stages and the key elements which should be taught for each one are identified and assessment is thorough. Teachers write their medium-term plans in appropriate depth and use national guidance material to ensure
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learning objectives are well focused. History is making an important contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Music

116. During the inspection it was not possible to judge all aspects of the music curriculum. However, medium-term planning shows coverage of performing, composing, listening and appraising. These lessons, combined with singing in assembly indicate that pupils' achievement is broadly at the expected levels at both key stages, and progress is satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection.
 117. Year 2 pupils can name percussion instruments and recognise that sounds are made in different ways. They sing in tune with good rhythm, clear diction and knowledge of the words. Year 1 pupils identify high and low sounds with some older pupils indicating the middle of the range of sounds. Key Stage 2 pupils sing in unison with good tone and rhythm. They are able to demonstrate various musical terms such as crescendo, diminuendo and allegro. They recognise tunes from a clapped beat. Year 6 pupils talked confidently about a range of musical instruments. They recalled composing music to accompany their contribution to a music festival and how this was notated. They are able to name a number of composers as a result of listening to the regular composer of the week featured in assembly. In assemblies all pupils sing tunelessly together, with good volume and diction.
 118. Teaching is satisfactory overall and one very well taught lesson was observed. This had a good pace which kept pupils involved, and well-focused learning objectives which enable all pupils to make progress. Pupils' response to the subject is good. They are very enthusiastic, concentrate well and enjoy demonstrating their work to the class.
 119. School year books show photographs of a variety of productions in which pupils sing and play instruments. During the autumn term a choir is formed to develop music for Christmas performances. Two pupils receive peripatetic tuition for cello and violin, and all pupils are introduced to a variety of instruments through regular visits from musicians. A recorder club is also well attended. Resources are good and include a library of pre-recorded music and a full range of percussion instruments. Music is supporting pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development well. The co-ordinator has appropriate expertise. A policy provides some guidance but a scheme of work is not available. This was judged to be necessary at the last inspection and became part of a key issue. It is still unclear how pupils' skills are developed year-on-year as they move through the school, particularly for those in Key Stage 2 and this is a weakness. The subject is already identified in the school development plan for review.
 120. **Physical education**
 120. Pupils' are achieving at the expected levels for their ages in the one element of the subject observed. Their progress is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from the full range of the physical education curriculum. School records indicate that swimming is a particular strength with several pupils capable of swimming a mile by age 11.
 121. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two gymnastic lessons. Key Stage 1 pupils know the importance of warm up and cool down activities. They put out and use large apparatus safely and find suitable solutions to the challenge set by different apparatus layouts. They perform safely and with appropriate control. Year 1 pupils take turns, find large and small spaces and are developing travelling skills. Year 3 pupils develop their ball skills,
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throwing and catching, the majority competently. They skip confidently. Pupils on the register of special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and make sound progress.

122. Pupils' attitudes are good and they behave very well, showing consideration for others. The hall is small for physical education and pupils share the space sensibly. They listen carefully to instructions and respond well to commands. They change quickly into suitable kit and are keen to take part in the lessons.
 123. Two lessons were seen taught, one was satisfactory and one lesson was very well taught. Teachers plan lessons carefully. Better teaching is characterised by learning objectives which challenge all pupils and allows sufficient time for practise. Time is used well and the plenary enables the teacher to assess progress.
 124. The previous report criticised the lack of a scheme of work and assessment opportunities. Now the subject is led soundly, with a suitable policy and scheme of work which ensure continuity and progression. Good arrangements are in place for assessment and these are used well. Extra-curricular activities contribute well to the subject, two staff, a football coach and parents are involved. Most older pupils take part in at least one of the opportunities provided in football, netball, athletics and dance. Some activities, such as involvement with the Kent County Cricket Team, enhance pupils' skills and social development. The previous inspection report highlighted the restrictions the small school hall placed on the subject. This is still the case and is of particular concern for older pupils where class numbers are high. Other resources are good and the school field and large playground provide valuable facilities.
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PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

125. The inspection was undertaken over a three day period, by three inspectors, for a total of seven inspector days. It was held four days into the start of the new academic year, when pupils were settling into new classes and the under-five children were attending in the mornings only. For most of their time in school, the inspectors visited classes and talked with individuals and groups of pupils. Twelve pupils read to inspectors and discussed their reading. All teachers were seen teaching on at least four occasions. There were 28 observations of lessons or parts of lessons, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, amounting to 30 hours overall, as well as observations of lunch and playtimes. Planned discussions were held with all teachers and some other staff, particularly concerning curriculum responsibilities. Additional discussions were held with governors and several parents. Policy documents, teachers' planning and assessment records, and other documents were examined. A parents' meeting was held before the inspection and ten parents attended to give their views about the work of the school. Inspectors analysed the 15 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

DATA AND INDICATORS

126. 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 - Y6 | 87 | 3 | 32 | 24 |

Teachers and classes

127. Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 3.60 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23 |

128. Education support staff (YR - Y6)

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week | 101.5 |

129. **Financial data**

Financial year:

1998/99

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total Income | 151,229 |
| Total Expenditure | 149,858 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,270 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 10,429 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 11,800 |

130. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

| |
|----|
| 40 |
| 15 |

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 | 79 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 67 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well | 62 | 31 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 50 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 60 | 33 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 67 | 27 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 67 | 27 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 47 | 40 | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 79 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour | 50 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school | 67 | 20 | 7 | 0 | 6 |

Other issues raised by parents

131. Several parents wrote to praise the school and its staff, with an individual expressing concern about staff and pupils' relationships.