

INSPECTION REPORT

**GOUDHURST AND KILNDOWN CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Beaman Close, Cranbrook Road
Goudhurst

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118601

Headteacher: Mr Paul Dorrington

Reporting inspector: Mr Richard Brent
7465

Dates of inspection: 7th to 10th February 2000

Inspection number: 327

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
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beaman Close Cranbrook Road Goudhurst Kent
Postcode:	TN17 1DZ
Telephone number:	01580 211365
Fax number:	01580 221768
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mrs Jean Jones
Date of previous inspection:	26 th February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Richard Brent	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Joy Buncher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	English	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Art	
		History	
		Religious education	
Gill Crew	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Under fives	

The inspection contractor was:

QAA Education Consultants
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset DT2 9PU

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Goudhurst. It is smaller than most primary schools, with 199 pupils on roll, compared to the national average of 226 pupils. Pupils attend full-time from Reception, where there are 15 pupils, to Year 6. The school is over-subscribed. All of the pupils are white. There is one pupil (0.25 per cent) whose first language is not English. The socio-economic background of pupils is generally above average; 16 pupils (8 per cent) claim free school meals, which is below average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average; 25 (13 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs at Stages 2 to 5, of these two have statements. Attainment on entry is at the county average. The school is very well supported by the local community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Goudhurst and Kilndown School achieves above average standards at both key stages and the provision in Reception and Key Stage 1 is particularly impressive. It has made good improvement since the last inspection and, although some weaknesses remain at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching overall is now good. The governors, headteacher and staff work hard and share a common vision for the school's continuing success. However, weaknesses in the organisation of staff responsibilities and accountabilities currently hinder greater progress. The school has average income per pupil and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements are very good in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Teaching and the quality of learning are very good in Reception and at Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' planning throughout the school is very good.
- Good arrangements are in place for teaching literacy and numeracy and standards in those subjects are good.
- The school has particularly good links with parents who support it strongly and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and the local community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- There are good procedures for monitoring attendance which result in above average figures.

What could be improved

- Overall teaching at Key Stage 2.
- The role of the leadership of the school in establishing a clear management structure with associated roles and responsibilities.
- The school's procedures for behaviour management.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in February, 1996, the school was found to have weaknesses. Since then it has improved and most of the areas of weakness identified have been addressed successfully, particularly those relating to assessment and planning. There have been changes in teaching staff and overall teaching has improved.

In English and mathematics, the national strategies have led to higher attainment by more pupils and attempts to give more coherence to the science curriculum have been successful. Standards in information technology are at the expectation in both key stages and, in religious education, the levels of attainment of the majority of pupils meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained in all other subjects at both key stages. The quality of pupils' learning is very good in Reception and at Key Stage 1; it is overall sound at Key Stage 2.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	A	A*	A
Writing	A	A	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	B	B	A	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Currently, levels of attainment throughout the school are above average at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology are at the expectation at both key stages. Similarly, in religious education, the levels of attainment of the majority of pupils meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained in all other subjects. The quality of pupils' learning in most lessons is good in Reception and at Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The school is on course to meet its targets for literacy and numeracy for 2000.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good in Reception and Key Stage 1 and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. At Key Stage 2, attitudes are satisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is good, particularly when pupils are directly supervised. However, there is some deterioration in some lessons at Key Stage 2.
Personal development and relationships	By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils remain keen to learn and are ready for the next phase of their education. The quality of relationships within the school is satisfactory.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
46 lessons seen overall	very good	very good	satisfactory

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

Teaching is very good in Reception and Key Stage 1. It is good in Year 6. All teaching is mainly good: 94 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better of which 39 per cent were good, 24 per cent very good and 2 per cent excellent. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is more variable than at Key Stage 1 and is overall satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last report when weaknesses in teaching were identified as a key issue. The improvement is linked mainly to staff changes, improved lesson planning and the more secure framework for teachers provided by the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy. As a result of the teaching, most pupils learn well and make sound progress in lessons. Teaching is monitored by the headteacher, but some weaknesses, mainly the management of behaviour, are either not identified clearly or corrective action is limited. This was observed in some lessons at Key Stage 2 and was also mentioned in the earlier report.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is at least satisfactory and often good. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and teachers plan these lessons well. In all subjects, they try to teach the skills required to achieve the tasks set.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory; it is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is satisfactory. The effective use of the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support staff help these pupils to make progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school supports pupils' personal development satisfactorily in a range of ways, for example, the personal, social and health education programme. Overall sound provision is made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school aims to provide a caring learning environment and teachers and support staff know their pupils well. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory.

The school has very good links with parents and the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Good links are made between the subjects of the curriculum, so that new learning in one subject consolidates previous learning in another. Literacy and numeracy provision is good. There is a good range of well-organised extra-curricular activities. The school has satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and drug mis-use. The school makes good use of visits to local places of interest, and residential visits for Year 6. There is good assessment practice in place, particularly in English and mathematics, and it is used satisfactorily to match lessons to the range of pupils' aptitudes.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher works hard to raise standards and he is ably supported by a hardworking, dedicated staff who help the school achieve the expected improvements. Currently, however, there are weaknesses in the organisation and clarity of responsibilities for the implementation of school policies.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are strongly supportive of the school and have appropriate committee structures. They meet their statutory obligations and share a commitment to school improvement. However, they lack systems to monitor effectively some aspects of the school's work, such as teaching and behaviour.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a general view of its work and tries to analyse what works well and why. It has developed a good system to predict future test performance. However, it has not led to the implementation of school policies to sustain fully in Key Stage 2 the standards of achievement reached at Key Stage 1.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are supported soundly and the school uses available resources, including those for information technology, well. Good use is made of specific grants for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs.

There is a good number of suitably experienced and well-qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and sufficient well-qualified support staff who are deployed constructively. Learning resources for most subjects are good. Accommodation is excellent and used well. The governors apply the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Children's progress is good. • Behaviour is good. • The school sets the right amount of homework. • Teaching in the school is good. • Parents are well informed about their children's progress. • The school is approachable. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority of parents believe that some classes are too large, the range of extra-curricular activities is limited and teaching in some classes in Key Stage 2 shows weaknesses.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views, except that they judge the school not to have fully effective organisational procedures for areas such as the management of pupil behaviour with the result that the quality of learning, progress and pupils' personal development at Key Stage 2 is sometimes checked. They agree that there are some weaknesses in teaching at Key Stage 2 but overall extra-curricular provision is good. There is also no correlation between the quality of teaching and class size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 In 1999, in National Curriculum Tests at the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment were above the average in English, and well above the average in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average in English, and well above the average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, results were at the average in English and above it in mathematics and science. In all three subjects attainment has improved at the national rate. Inspection evidence indicates that in all three subjects pupils in the current Year 6 show equal attainment and the school's targets reflect this. The major weaknesses identified in the previous report relating to standards are being successfully addressed: in English and mathematics the national strategies have led to higher attainment by more pupils, including higher attainers, and attempts to give more coherence to the science curriculum have been mainly successful. In information technology, attainment is now at the expectation and there have been good improvements in art and design and technology.
- 2 In 1999, in National Curriculum Tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was very high in comparison with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was well above the average in reading and mathematics and very high compared to the average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading and mathematics were well above the average and very high in writing. Since 1997, results in reading and mathematics have been consistently good. Inspection evidence indicates that standards currently are above the average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicated that 100 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, a very high figure, and 41 per cent of pupils were recorded as attaining the higher Level 3, well above the average.
- 3 Children join the Reception class with attainment that is at the county average and this is confirmed by the assessment of children shortly after entry. They improve well during their time in Reception and almost all achieve the expected levels of attainment by the age of five in all areas. Many exceed them. Achievement in language and literacy is above the expected standard in lessons. Children speak confidently to each other and to adults in either small groups or in front of the whole class; they listen with increasing attention and join in the repetitive parts of a story or rhyming words. They know that print carries meaning and predict words in text; they also make good progress and develop early writing skills quickly. Higher attaining children write independently and have an understanding of punctuation. Children's work in the mathematical area of learning improves well, and attainment is above the expected level by five. Children work with numbers confidently and show good mental agility; they look at price labels and select coins to pay for them, using two or more coins to make up the sum required. Children's knowledge of the world increases well: for example, they name parts of the body, make three-dimensional houses and show good mouse control in information technology. By five, attainment is above expected levels. Children make good progress in their physical development and the majority achieve above the expected levels: they develop good hand and eye co-ordination and use a range of large apparatus effectively. Their creative development is on course to exceed expected standards. The children enjoy painting and drawing and produce high quality observational drawings of themselves and butterflies. They show a bold use of colour when

mixing paints and gentle blending of shades when they use watercolours.

- 4 Pupils in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Similarly, they are at the expectation in information technology. Attainment in religious education reflects the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils read very well and attainment in this respect is above average. Writing skills of current pupils are also well developed and attainment is also above average; a number achieve higher standards. Handwriting is generally good. Pupils listen carefully and speaking skills are particularly well developed. Pupils show an increasingly wide vocabulary as they move from Year 1 to Year 2. The time devoted to English in Key Stage 1 is having a positive effect on pupils' literacy skills. They make good use of them in religious education, science and history in particular. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is above average and many attain high standards. Almost all of them add and subtract numbers to 100 accurately and know the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. Their numeracy skills are used consistently across the curriculum. In science, pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils have a good, broad knowledge of all areas of science. They describe the properties of different materials and conduct a range of interesting experiments. Many show good observational and descriptive skills. In information technology, all pupils use the keyboard to input text; they control the mouse very well when using drag and drop programs. In religious education, most pupils have a sound knowledge of the major world faiths and know about a range of festivals, such as Advent leading up to Christmas.

- 5 Pupils in Year 6 show attainment that is above average in English, mathematics and science. In information technology it is at the expectation. In religious education, pupils' attainment meets that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils read accurately and have a good understanding of what they have read. Handwriting is generally neat and joined. Pupils use correct punctuation and usually spell accurately. Sustained writing and the use of imaginative vocabulary are good. Pupils' listening skills are not as well developed as their speaking skills but many are confident to answer questions or share their ideas in class. Almost all pupils can use the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book and they understand the classification system used in libraries. Pupils' literacy skills are good. Effective use is made of them, especially writing, in subjects such as science and history. Pupils have good number skills which are applied well when solving problems. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are also good; they draw block graphs, histograms and line graphs accurately and are provided with good opportunities to interpret data from graphs. Data handling is a well-developed area of mathematics and pupils' numeracy skills are good. Evidence was seen of their use in supporting learning, particularly in science. Their knowledge of science is good and pupils use scientific concepts and vocabulary confidently because teachers emphasise them when discussing science topics. Pupils display particularly good skills in practical science and their progress is helped because they enjoy such activities. Pupils use word processing facilities well to communicate information and find out about different topics using CD-ROM. They combine text and other forms of information and draw graphs confidently. These skills are used well in other subjects, such as entering data and producing graphs in science when calculating the height of sunflowers. Pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity and a range of other world faiths, including Judaism and Hinduism.

- 6 Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve standards that are at least

satisfactory and often good in other subjects. The satisfactory standards identified in the previous report, in geography, history, music and physical education have been maintained. The weaknesses in art and in design and technology have been overcome and good standards of attainment are produced by a number of pupils in these subjects. In art, pupils use a range of media well and appreciate the work of different artists, such as Monet. In music, pupils usually sing well and compose simple pieces that can be played on instruments. In history, their knowledge of life in past times is generally good and their understanding of the passing of time secure. In geography, pupils can explain river features and follow simple maps accurately.

- 7 Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good but it is better overall at Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Features accounting for good achievement are related to well organised planning and, often, interesting lessons. Pupils are helped to achieve by a range of interesting methods and the effective use of resources. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good range of language skills which helps them to make good progress in other subjects. The main feature hindering even higher achievement, particularly early in Key Stage 2, is linked mainly to teacher time in a number of lessons being taken up with managing the behaviour of a minority of pupils, often boys. Overall, the school recognises its previous weaknesses in numeracy and science and has taken effective steps to improve them through both the National Numeracy Strategy and good subject leadership in science.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress through the school. This is illustrated by the fact that, in 1999, by the time they left school, almost 90 per cent of pupils achieved at least Level 3 overall in English, mathematics and science, despite nearly 20 per cent of pupils in the school being on the special educational needs register. This progress is associated with the satisfactory support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator, other teachers and classroom assistants who help pupils in the classroom. Over the last four years, there has remained a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. By the end of Key Stage 1, girls outperform boys significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 they continue to do better overall. Inspection evidence indicates that a probable reason for this disparity is linked to the lack of attention paid by some boys in a number of lessons. The school is aware of this issue and has plans to address it. Also, more boys than girls have been identified as having special educational needs. The school sets appropriate targets in relation to attainment in English and mathematics for each year group; the data and targets are reviewed and revised regularly. Taking previous assessment data into account, targets are sufficiently challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Parents state that their children like going to school and pupils show good attitudes to their work, with most being keen to take part in lessons and the extra activities which the school provides. In this respect, standards since the last inspection have been sustained. Behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory; many pupils show initiative and are able to contribute increasingly to the life of the school; they form good relationships with each other and most are considerate of others. Attendance is good.
- 10 Pupils are keen to come to school and there is a prompt start to the day. From the

Reception class upwards through Key Stage 1 pupils have inquiring minds and are keen to learn. With some exceptions early in Key Stage 2 this is sustained until Year 6, with the majority of pupils generally responding well to the opportunities provided by the school. For instance, older pupils work well together to produce compositions in music. On other occasions, however, they can be less constructive.

- 11 Behaviour around the school and grounds is satisfactory. Pupils are generally polite to each other and to adults. Very good examples were seen daily in the dining hall. Although there is a policy on behaviour, it is not given to parents or posted anywhere in the school. Also, there are no detailed whole-school strategies to deal with mis-behaviour when it occurs with the result that staff often respond in a variety of ways. Behaviour in lessons is variable: it is very good in Reception and at Key Stage 1 but less good in Year 3 and, on occasions, in other classes at Key Stage 2. The policy statement on bullying has been sent to parents and no incidents were reported during the inspection. There have been no exclusions.
- 12 Personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Most parents say that the school helps their child to become more responsible and some informal arrangements are in place. For example, older pupils help duty teachers on wet days by staying with younger ones. Similarly, Key Stage 1 pupils tidy up without being asked after extra-curricular art sessions. Generally, however, because there is no planned provision across the school to develop responsibility, it does not always develop as well as it could. Overall relationships are sound: they are particularly good in Reception and at Key Stage 1. On the playground, large groups play happily together and, as they progress, older pupils become involved in discussion and organisation which require them to consider other pupils' likes and dislikes. However, examples were seen where a minority of pupils at Key Stage 2 do not always consider their fellows.
- 13 Attendance is good and levels of unauthorised absence are low. Pupils are punctual at the start of the day and for lessons. Good attendance is a strength of the school and facilitates learning.
- 14 The position is broadly the same as at the last inspection where similar strengths and weaknesses were observed. Importantly, the link between the inconsistent application of discipline standards and indifferent behaviour was noted then and therefore progress has been unsatisfactory in this respect. However, there has been good progress with the anti-bullying policy. Further improvements will depend on the effectiveness of revised strategies for behaviour management.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 Pupils are generally well taught and this helps to raise their achievement and learning. Teaching is very good in Reception and Key Stage 1. It is also good in Year 6. Overall teaching is mainly good: 94 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better, of which 39 per cent were good, 24 per cent very good and 2 per cent excellent. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is more variable than at Key Stage 1 and is overall satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last report when weaknesses in teaching led to the governing body having to address a key issue. The improvement is linked mainly to staff changes, improved lesson planning and the more secure framework provided by the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy. Monitoring of teaching has provided day-to-day support for teachers but mechanisms to review the performance of staff are not fully

effective. The major area of weakness in teaching at Key Stage 2, also mentioned in the last report, is linked to difficulties in the management of behaviour, mainly of small groups of boys. Overall, however, there is now a brisker pace to lessons and, in literacy and numeracy, in particular, there is more scope and challenge for higher attainers. Arrangements for the setting of homework are more effective and standards of marking have improved considerably.

- 16 The teaching of children under five is very good. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and their management are very good. This ensures that the children behave well, are interested and concentrate on a wide range of purposeful activities. Personal and social development is promoted well and as a result children make informed choices about their activities, learn right from wrong and gain in confidence and independence. A good balance is achieved between teacher directed and child initiated activities; this is supported by good planning which ensures that there is equality of opportunities for all children. Language and literacy is taught well and promoted through well-planned imaginative play areas and drama. The teacher also skilfully promotes mathematical vocabulary through a well-chosen range of activities: children are encouraged to learn through a range of practical tasks such as handling money. Data gathered from baseline assessment is used extremely well to group children and set appropriate work in literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching is also very good in the other areas of learning.
- 17 The teaching of all subjects is mainly good and strengths and weaknesses are similar throughout the school, except that the management of pupils' behaviour is more effective in Reception and Key Stage 1. Literacy is generally well taught and the effective use of the literacy hour is helping pupils to improve and attain above average standards by the time they leave the school. Teachers show good subject knowledge and a secure understanding of the recommended National Literacy Strategy. They plan carefully to provide all components of the framework. When literacy teaching is particularly good, it harnesses pupils' imaginations from the start, and is planned well to ensure that pupils of all attainments meet the specific learning objectives. A particularly good example of this was seen in a lesson on the meaning of old fashioned words when pupils from Year 4 studied words from Shakespeare, 'Pied Beauty' and 'My Bed is a Boat'. Skilful teaching ensured that they discovered meanings. Questions are used well to assess all pupils and the teaching strategies ensure that most pupils make good gains in learning how to communicate with each other and with wider audiences. Most pupils' literacy skills are developed and used well in other subjects. Teachers regularly provide speaking opportunities and written activities are common in science, history and religious education.
- 18 Mathematics is generally taught well. The quality of learning observed during the inspection was mainly good. Teachers are making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to ensure that pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding develops systematically. Mathematics is used well to support learning in other subjects such as information technology and geography. Particularly good examples were seen in science where various measurements are a feature of most practical lessons.
- 19 The quality of science teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and often good. A close study of pupils' work and discussions with them indicate that science knowledge and understanding is well developed.

However, an equally obvious strength is the pupils' expertise in preparing and recording the results of practical work.

- 20 Teachers make sound use of the school's resources to support learning and information technology. Computers are used regularly in all subjects and pupils have a wide range of experience.
- 21 The school's teaching arrangements reflect appropriately the status of religious education as a core subject and sufficient time is given to its teaching. Lessons seen were good: teachers have a secure subject knowledge, helped by clear lesson plans and good resources. In most lessons, learning is promoted because teachers move pupils on quickly to thinking about the meaning of the story which they have heard.
- 22 Expectations of pupils are very good at Key Stage 1 and overall good at Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding successfully, often as a result of being required to put in intellectual and creative effort. Expectations are reflected in lesson plans and the quality of planning is very good throughout the school. All lesson plans identify clearly what pupils are to learn, take account of previous work and provide clear detail about activities and methods. Teachers encourage discussion and examples were seen of productive group work. However, on other occasions, mainly because the behaviour of a minority of pupils is not checked appropriately, group work is disrupted and opportunities for personal development are lost. Similarly, on occasions, the very good planning of teachers does not always bear fruit because instructions and questions are not always made clear and the teacher continues to talk, despite the fact that some pupils are not paying attention. In many lessons observed, there is satisfactory curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use the schemes of work to plan work for groups of differing ability within the class. However, they do not take sufficient account of the personal learning plans for all pupils. Although they are learning, these pupils' progress is restricted and is only satisfactory overall. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are being addressed through ability groupings and extension lessons in Year 6. However, in some lessons seen, it is frequently average attainers whose needs are overlooked because of the demands of both pupils with special educational or behavioural needs and the more articulate, higher attaining children.
- 23 Time is used well in most lessons. Lessons are usually conducted at a good pace and most pupils work hard, despite the rare use of clear time targets. Resources are used well to support learning and classroom assistants provide effective support. Overall, the use of day-to-day assessment is good at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2. Good examples were seen of the effective use of assessment to group pupils in literacy and numeracy but, in other subjects, assessment is not used regularly to match teaching to the aptitudes of all pupils. The quality of marking is very good. Work is marked carefully and includes helpful comments; marking encourages improvement, acknowledges when it has been achieved and comments specifically on the subject content of the piece of work.
- 24 Homework is used well to support pupils' learning. It begins in Reception and increases as pupils move through the school. It covers mainly English, mathematics and science, together with topic work. Arrangements generally follow the stated school policy and meet with the approval of the majority of parents.

- 25 At the time of the last inspection there were important shortcomings in 25 per cent of all lessons seen. Weaknesses were linked to poor lesson planning, low expectations, inaccurate use of assessment and inappropriate behaviour management. Higher attaining pupils did not perform as well as they should have done. Since then, there have been improvements in the areas of planning, expectations and assessment. Higher attaining pupils are now achieving better standards. The area yet to be tackled successfully is the management of the classroom behaviour of a minority of pupils at Key Stage 2. Provided that effective systems are put in place, the school should have a good capacity for further improvement.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

- 26 The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils in the school is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met, including religious education and the provision of a satisfactory programme for personal, social and health education. The curriculum for the under fives is good. It is organised around the required areas of learning and the teacher has already begun to take good account of the National Early Learning Goals for children of this age, which is not yet a statutory requirement. The provision in literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is particularly good. The children's personal, social and emotional development is catered for well through the calm, purposeful and supportive environment created in the Reception class. There is a smooth transition into the National Curriculum when appropriate. The breadth and relevance of the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 are satisfactory. The time allocated to teach the curriculum is within statutory guidelines. However, the time allocation for teaching sessions throughout the day is unbalanced. For example, the literacy strategy allocation regularly exceeds the recommended hour. Consequently, pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, have a daily session that can be as long as one hour and twenty minutes when a short concentrated session covering another subject could be planned. The teaching of French enriches the curriculum in Years 5 and 6 and many pupils benefit from music tuition. A good range of visits and visitors supports the pupils' learning.
- 27 There has been good improvement in planning since the last inspection and there are sound policies and schemes in all subjects. The implementation of appropriate programmes of study has promoted attainment as pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on progressively. Although, there is occasional repetition in some topic coverage as pupils move through the school, the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress is safeguarded by the schemes. Monitoring of the curriculum is undertaken through the review of planning by senior staff, sampling of pupils' work and a programme of classroom visits by co-ordinators. It is done well.
- 28 There is effective identification of pupils with special needs and, for the most part, they receive the support to which they are entitled. Curriculum planning and implementation take into account pupils' competencies and specific needs identified in education plans by providing appropriate teaching methods and resources. A significant minority of children have more complex needs and appropriate support is yet to have an impact on their progress. The curriculum provided for pupils withdrawn from lessons is successful in raising attainment and the Code of Practice is followed well. All pupils on the register of special educational needs have individual education plans. These are conscientiously considered when work is

being planned by the learning support assistants or the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school has recognised that there are classes in the school where there is a significant difference in the number of boys and girls and also that girls regularly out-perform boys. However, they have yet to put in place secure strategies to improve standards for boys and ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to benefit from the school's curriculum.

- 29 The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have improved standards of achievement. This is mainly the result of improved planning, the grouping of pupils of similar ability, so that work can be more easily matched to their needs, and an increase in the range of tasks set. Basic skills are taught well, particularly phonics in literacy and the rules of number in numeracy. Homework is set regularly and frequently extends the knowledge and skills which pupils are learning within the class.
- 30 The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. A strength is the inclusion of a range of activities for Key Stage 1 pupils. Some parents raised concerns about the perceived lack of sporting activities on offer to the children. However, there are netball, football and cricket teams which participate in local matches and tournaments from time to time. The range of activities provided meets a variety of interests and pupils can extend their sporting skills through clubs such as short tennis and keep fit, or their artistic talents in music and art clubs. The pupils show a good commitment to extra-curricular activities as demonstrated by the sixty pupils who regularly attend the choir
- 31 The contribution of the community to the pupils' learning is very good. The Friends' Association raises a significant amount of money for the school which enhances opportunities for pupils. Members of the community visit the school. The school makes use of the local area and shopkeepers and farmers offer welcome support. The local village is important to many of the children and the good links develop their sense of citizenship. The school also has a good relationship with the church which also contributes well to community links. Curricular co-operation with the pre-school groups and schools within the secondary sector is well established and has a positive impact on the pupils' learning as it ensures effective learning continuity for the children.
- 32 Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. There is a policy for personal, social and health education, which includes sex, drugs and health education but no planned programme with appropriate attention to all the required elements. There is also no designated co-ordinator to oversee the development of this area of the curriculum. As a result, lessons dedicated to personal, social and health education whilst often successful on their own, do not form part of a structured approach which ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding are built on progressively.
- 33 The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is overall satisfactory. Spiritual development is fostered soundly in many lessons. Pupils often reflect on different moods and styles in art and music when they study Monet, El Greco and Bach; good examples were also seen when pupils wrote out their own millennium thoughts and prayers. Pupils attend church for Christmas, Harvest and other festivals and the local vicar regularly addresses assemblies; all help to enhance spiritual development. Nevertheless, planned provision for spiritual development in some subjects is limited because the school's planning does not make clear how the

subjects of the curriculum will meet the policy's laudable aims.

- 34 The school's provision for moral development is satisfactory. Pupils think of others worse off than themselves by collecting for a range of charities. Similarly, assemblies often contain stories and themes which require pupils to consider, for example, those with a variety of disabilities. Adults also present sound role models. However, rules are not always clearly understood by pupils, partly because practice is inconsistent, and this sometimes leads to a lack of consideration for others.
- 35 The school makes sound provision for pupils' social development. Frequent informal opportunities are provided for them to work co-operatively and to take responsibility in lessons and many pupils take advantage of them. The earlier report noted that in some lessons social values were not always fully developed by teachers and some examples of this were seen. For example, both in a science and a physical education lesson the quality of group work was affected adversely by a few pupils, often boys, not co-operating with the rest. Overall, the good range of clubs and activities, combined with the residential visit to Somerset, make a positive contribution to pupils' social development.
- 36 Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Teachers increase pupils' understanding of their own local and national history and geography. Art and music foster a knowledge of other cultures, such as those of Spain and Tibet. In religious education, work on Hinduism links to work done in geography. Older pupils also learn something of the French language and culture. Currently, provision to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society is limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 37 The school has maintained the caring ethos noted in the last inspection. Staff provide a good example to pupils and the attitude to them is made clear by the notice on the door of the school office that says that children are particularly welcome. However, inconsistent responses to inappropriate behaviour do not always give pupils a clear message about the standards required of them and sometimes poor behaviour is dealt with too leniently.
- 38 The school safeguards its pupils effectively. Child protection procedures are in place and understood by all staff. Three members of staff are trained first-aiders; the other members of staff will be trained later in the year. Procedure for the care of medicines, recording accidents and caring for children who are unwell work effectively. There is a medical room, although no bed is available, and pupils who are ill are looked after sympathetically and well.
- 39 The school site is maintained well, kept free from litter and equipment is checked appropriately. Fire drills are held regularly and the procedures are understood by pupils. Pupils are supervised well when they are in school and procedures for managing school visits are clear and comprehensive. The staff handbook provides teachers and support staff with very clear guidance about procedures related to welfare, health and safety. Pupils are carefully registered every day and the procedures for improving attendance are good. Good procedures are in place for releasing pupils to parents, buses or taxis at the end of the day
- 40 Procedures for managing behaviour are unsatisfactory. The school does not provide clear rules of conduct and not all classes have class rules displayed. Individual

teachers rely on own methods for promoting harmony and good behaviour. Circle time and personal and social education sessions are used for discussing personal relationships and ways of making the school community a happy place. However some teachers are too tolerant of poor or disruptive behaviour; although there is an effective system of stars and merit badges for good work and behaviour there are no clear methods and strategies to help teachers manage poor classroom behaviour.

- 41 Procedures for monitoring pupil's personal development are satisfactory. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and maintain a constant overview of their development. There is a home school agreement and sound policies are in place for dealing with bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils are given some opportunities to take responsibility within the classroom and around the school: for example, Year 6 pupils play a part in assemblies and help during lunch. Older pupils support younger ones. Pupils also have the opportunity to go on a variety of visits, including a residential stay in Somerset. Overall, however, there is a limited number of planned opportunities for pupils to take significant responsibilities around the school.
- 42 The systems for assessing attainment and progress are good and have been much improved since the last inspection. The school now has a clear policy on assessment which is being implemented by all staff. There is a clear expectation that work will be marked regularly and agreement about what this means in practice both across the school and within different subjects. Assessment is firmly linked to National Curriculum attainment targets and there is effective use of tests and other data. Targets for individual children are being set. The school has an ethos for improvement and is developing strategies to ensure that all pupils, included the gifted and those with learning difficulties, fulfil their potential. Assessment is used particularly effectively to place pupils in groups within the classroom for different subjects and activities. They are given a variety of appropriate resources, tasks and levels of support to meet their individual needs. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Teachers keep detailed records and portfolios of work and pupils are now involved in some self and peer group assessment. Pupils are given good opportunities for independent learning and research in using information technology and the new school library. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are assessed effectively, this includes the needs of the gifted who are given extension work. However, there is a need to focus more directly on the progress made by the average pupil. The overall use of assessment information to help in planning is satisfactory. The progress made in assessment and recording since the last inspection is satisfactory and the new procedures are taking the school forward.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 43 Parents are very satisfied with the way that the school is run. They are positive about the school's aims and believe that the creation of single-age classes, new teaching appointments and, of course, a brand new building have helped standards. Many parents are involved with the school: they listen to readers, accompany school trips and help with homework, particularly literacy and numeracy. They play a significant role in helping standards to remain good and it is a strength of the school.
- 44 The parent-teacher association is well supported and its minutes are displayed on

the notice board in school. Its generous financial support has been spent on books and computers and this has had a beneficial effect on the quality of the school's provision. It has also offered good advice on the implementation of the home-school agreement. Parents and children both enjoy, and gain benefit from, the Christmas Fayre, quiz evenings and barn dances.

- 45 The quality of information provided for parents is good. The governors' annual report is clear and concise and the prospectus is helpful. The school's newsletters are informative and well received and parents know in advance when to expect them; this is a good indication of the importance the school places on communication with parents. Curriculum information is sent regularly, three consultation meetings with teachers are held annually and end of year reports are helpful in highlighting pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Not surprisingly, parents believe that they are well informed and the majority state that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with potential problems or queries. Overall, the same very good partnership with parents noted at the last inspection remains in operation.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 46 There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the major issues raised then, particularly those relating to the curriculum and lesson planning, have been addressed well. The overall leadership and management of the school is satisfactory and has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Governors support the school well. They have an appropriate committee structure and make good use of their skills in meetings: they agree both the budget and the improvement plan. In the recent past, they have shown an excellent grasp of strategic planning as when completing successfully the lengthy process which has led to the move to the present school. Together with the headteacher, they understand the community which the school serves. Both governors and headteacher share a vision for the future of the school and have high expectations for its continued success. However, there is a lack of clarity about the organisation of staff roles and responsibilities necessary for their successful realisation. For example, job descriptions of the headteacher and senior management team are unclear about responsibilities for important areas such as the management of pupil behaviour, assessment and curriculum management and some whole school policies such as handwriting. As a result, staff are often unclear about important procedures and standards of learning are blunted as a result. Governors fulfil all statutory obligations and have ensured effective arrangements for the successful delivery of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy.
- 47 The school's arrangements for appraising teaching staff and assessing performance management have slipped behind schedule. However, the professional development of staff is a priority in the school development plan. The headteacher observes lessons and works with staff to support and encourage improvement. Nevertheless, although both the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators have been delegated responsibilities, they often have insufficient time and authority to effect improvement. The quality of teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection; it now remains to improve the management of pupil behaviour in some lessons at Key Stage 2 which was also noted in the last report.
- 48 The deputy headteacher has a full teaching timetable but has worked extremely hard to effect significant improvements in the organisation of the curriculum and in

teachers' planning. The constraints of his heavy work programme make it difficult for him to make a fuller contribution to the management of the school.

- 49 Subject co-ordinators work hard to carry out their duties; they understand the strengths and weaknesses of their subject areas and have played an important part in raising standards. When allocated non-contact time, they use it well to improve the organisation and planning in their subject areas.
- 50 Overall, a hard working staff competently support the management of the school and they also have played an important role in raising standards.
- 51 Arrangements for development planning are sound. There is a clear process of consultation with staff before the plan is drawn up and governors are involved appropriately in the necessary long-term planning. The plan sets out clearly success criteria, responsibilities and accountabilities. Financial planning is linked satisfactorily to development planning and the school uses educational technology well. It has an efficient financial management system and the administration supports the work of the teachers well. An extremely competent financial administrator provides accurate data to enable the headteacher, chair of finance and governing body to monitor expenditure and to plan for unforeseen contingencies. She is also central to the very good communication with parents who speak highly of her competence. Funds for specific purposes, such as special educational needs and literacy and numeracy training, are allocated suitably against well-defined objectives. They are spent effectively: provision for special educational needs is satisfactory and almost all pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- 52 The day-to-day management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. Funding is used well to provide learning support assistants who help to improve standards. Systems for record keeping and monitoring progress are good. Baseline and assessment data from standardised tests are used well to help set targets and predict results. Support from outside specialist agencies is managed well and used as necessary: for example, both the educational psychologist and the LEA's Behaviour Support Unit have been involved in addressing issues of behaviour and relationships with some older pupils. The governing body is well informed through the hardworking special educational needs governor and discharges its duties appropriately.
- 53 The governing body is aware of best-value principles. It understands the quality of education provided by similar schools and evaluates its standards compared with them as best it can. However, because of a lack of data and the particular circumstances around the move to the new school, it is not always able to evaluate whether it costs more or less than similar schools to achieve such standards. Although the governing body and headteacher regularly challenge themselves about the opportunities offered and question carefully the value of new initiatives, there is scope for more attention to some areas. These include the nature, cost and scale of the special educational needs provision and the available use of total non-contact time. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that all outside suppliers and contractors provide good value for money. The financial administrator provides a detailed and careful analysis of the school's financial position and procedures but there has been no formal audit for over three years.
- 54 The school has a good level of well-qualified staff to teach the subjects of the

National Curriculum, religious education and children under the age of five. There are also well qualified, skilful classroom assistants and other support staff, such as lunchtime assistants, who contribute well to the management of the pupils.

- 55 Accommodation is excellent and this helps standards of attainment and the quality of learning. The library is well stocked and the books selected have been chosen carefully to give quality support to learning in all subject areas.
- 56 The school is trying hard to raise standards and pupils achieve good standards. The quality of teaching is mainly good and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Leadership and management are overall satisfactory and there is a strong commitment to improvement by all the school. This, however, will depend largely on the success of the school in developing practical ways of managing the improvement of pupils' discipline, progress and attainment. The school has an above average income per pupil and gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve arrangements for the leadership and day-to-day management of the school by:
- clarifying the roles, responsibilities and the targets of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team;
 - continuing to monitor the quality of teaching and the performance of staff so that weaknesses, particularly at Key Stage 2, can be identified and addressed more efficiently.
- (Paragraphs 14, 15, 32, 33, 46, 47, 48, 53, 127)
- (2) Improve procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour at Key Stage 2 by developing a whole-school strategy which has as important features:
- an agreed set of responses which teachers can use to deal with misbehaviour when it occurs in lessons;
 - specific arrangements within the provision for those with additional behavioural needs such as in-class support and withdrawal;
 - enlisting the full support of parents in carrying through the agreed procedures.
- (Paragraphs 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 22, 25, 28, 37, 40, 79, 83, 84, 91, 112, 120)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	24	39	29	4	0	2

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	199
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	49

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	13	12	15
	Total	22	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81	85	93
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	23	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85	89	89
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.4
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	308306
Total expenditure	299488
Expenditure per pupil	1505
Balance brought forward from previous year	2958
Balance carried forward to next year	11776

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	134

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	42	13	2	1
The teaching is good.	55	29	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	40	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	1	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	62	25	7	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	70	23	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	31	5	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	33	7	0	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

57 Children start school before their fifth birthday. There are currently 15 pupils under the age of five and they all attend school full-time. They work in the Reception class with children who have had their fifth birthday. The teacher of the under fives has worked very hard and has been successful in implementing a good curriculum for these young children. She has created a very attractive, stimulating well-ordered environment with a variety of areas in which the children can work and enjoy purposeful play. The majority of children have attended pre-school education and attainment on entry to the school is generally in line with county expectations in all areas of learning. The indications are that the children are on course to achieve above the nationally recommended learning outcomes for children of this age in all areas of learning and they make good progress overall.

Personal and social development

58 All children make good progress in their personal and social development and should achieve the expected outcomes in this area of learning. They learn to work and play co-operatively with each other and quickly feel confident and secure in the routines of the class. They are adept at choosing activities or resources. They work and play happily alongside each other and share equipment. Children co-operate well with others in role-play. They form very good relationships with the staff and respond well to discussions and instructions. They enjoy adult attention, but also concentrate on activities independently.

59 Teaching is very good. Good behaviour is promoted through effective teaching. The teacher and support staff have consistently high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. They constantly praise and reinforce good behaviour and explain why it is important, for example, to listen to others speaking.

Language and literacy

60 By the age of five, children's attainments in language and literacy are on course to exceed the nationally recommended outcomes. Skills are promoted well throughout the curriculum. Children speak confidently to each other and to adults within small groups and in front of the whole class. The vocabulary of the majority of children is well developed and many speak in complex sentences. All children take part in role-play activities: for example, with puppets or in the 'greeting card factory'; this encourages them to develop conversation skills and imaginative language. Children enjoy books and stories. They listen with increasing attention and join in the repetitive parts of a story or rhyming words. They know that print carries meaning and predict words in text. Children learn to recognise, and later write, their own names. They learn letter names, sounds and shapes. Children apply their knowledge of letters well to spell words. Children make good progress and quickly develop early writing skills. They make marks confidently on paper and write letter strings to represent a story. Higher attaining children write independently and have an understanding of punctuation.

61 The quality of teaching is very good. Planning is of a high quality and is very detailed. There is very good liaison between the teacher and the assistants who

share in the assessment of children's progress. Information gathered is used to build a record of each child's achievements and to evaluate and inform planning. Staff in the Reception class provide very good role models for the children. They speak clearly, emphasising and explaining new vocabulary. Children are encouraged to talk about their activities. They are confident that staff will listen to them. More formal literacy sessions are planned and the teacher makes very effective use of books to develop reading skills. The match of tasks planned for the children during group activities is interesting and varied and suits the abilities of the children. This helps them to make good progress in independent reading and writing skills. Time is used well and pupils are not kept sitting for too long. Children's interest is maintained by the good links made between the various elements of the lesson. It is also helped by a classroom environment which makes good use of language.

Mathematics

- 62 The children make good progress in mathematics and their achievements are on line to exceed the nationally recommended outcomes. In daily mental mathematics sessions, children learn to count and order numbers to ten and above by using words, picture and symbols. They listen to 'number stories' and calculate the answers to addition and subtraction sums on their own. Children show confidence when working with numbers and their mental agility is good. They are taught to form numbers correctly and they are quick to recognise a missing number in a sequence. The children have first hand experiences of handling money in the card shop: they look at the price labels and hand over the correct coins. The higher attaining pupils give the correct change if it is required.
- 63 The progress children make in developing their mathematical skills is a result of careful planning and good teaching. Learning is firmly based on practical experiences: the use of varied strategies and activities engages the interest of all the children. Activities are purposeful and visual resources are used to particularly good effect to consolidate learning. Children record their work appropriately. Good use of questioning and interventions helps children to improve their knowledge, understanding and skill. They are encouraged to use the correct language when answering questions. Detail of what the children know, understand and can do is recorded and there is clear evidence to show where this has then been used to inform planning and adapt lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 64 The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is on line to exceed the nationally recommended outcomes, and they are making good progress. Children can name and label parts of the body and use all of their senses to find out about things. They know about the life cycle of the butterfly and can sequence this in the correct order using diagrams and words. They remember the correct names for each stage of the butterfly's development. Children make good progress in recognising different materials, such as card and wood. They can explain some properties, for example, 'hard' and 'bendy'. They develop their skills of cutting and joining, folding and making three-dimensional houses using recycled materials. These activities are linked to the children finding out about their local community: they can make maps of the school and of the village. The same skills are developed when the children make cards in the 'card factory', but also children apply the skills to much finer work and show good hand control. Children make good progress in

computer skills. They are very confident, have good mouse control and use this to click and drag on icons. They can pull down the tool bar and select a choice, for example, to print material. Children use the printer confidently and wait eagerly for their work to be produced. They are always proud of the outcome.

- 65 The quality of teaching is very good, particularly with respect to planning, the production of interactive displays and to easily accessible activities which capture the children's interest. The use of visual resources motivates and enthuses children. Lessons demonstrate good management and use of time. The teacher has a very good understanding both of the needs of this age group and of individual children. She encourages and motivates the children. Her use of praise lets the children know that they are valued and they want to succeed. Careful questioning extends and reinforces children's knowledge and understanding. Support staff are effectively deployed and their interaction with children is very good. The teacher works with all children at some point during sessions which helps her to judge the attainment of individual pupils.

Physical development

- 66 Children make good progress in their physical development. By the age of five, the majority will achieve above the expected levels. Children have regular opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities. They develop hand and eye co-ordination as they practise cutting and sticking. They build with construction kits and show increasing dexterity. Children develop good physical skills in writing and practise the formation of letters and numbers regularly. The Reception class have their own outdoor play area where they use a range of large apparatus, such as wheeled vehicles, to practise steering and to develop their co-ordination.
- 67 The quality of teaching is very good, particularly because of the very well planned range of activities available for the children. Staff praise and encourage children and their confidence is developed through this support. Children learn to take turns and share and understand how to use apparatus and equipment with care and attention to safety. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their imagination alongside their physical skills, for example, when using the trikes and observing the traffic lights on the roadways around the playground. All pupils are given individual support and encouragement in their physical development and this helps them to improve their performance.

Creative development

- 68 The children's creative development is on course to exceed the expected standard by the time they are five and they make good progress. They enjoy painting and drawing and have produced high quality observational drawings of themselves using pastels that show good hand control. Children draw butterflies carefully when finding out about their life cycle and try with great perseverance to get both sides the same. During this work, there are good links with mathematics and pupils use the word symmetrical to describe the butterfly's wings. Children draw very detailed pictures on the front of the greeting cards which they make in the 'factory' and these clearly represent the message of the card. Pupils' work shows both bold use of colour when they use ready mix paint and gentle blending of shades when they use watercolours. In the role-play area, currently the 'card factory and shop', they play imaginatively. They use their knowledge of the world outside school as they take on the role of shopper and assistant. In music, they enjoy taking part in songs and

know when it is the time to join in. They play instruments confidently, hitting and shaking their instruments and keep a steady beat.

- 69 Creative activities are linked to all areas of learning in the Reception class. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the quality of teaching is very good overall. In a music lesson observed, the quality of teaching was excellent and the teacher enthralled the children. The teacher and support staff have high expectations of the children. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the need to stimulate the children's creative learning is seen in both her detailed planning and in the stimulating environment she has created. There are excellent links between creative learning and all other areas of learning in the curriculum.

ENGLISH

- 70 In 1999 attainment in English at age seven was well above national expectations and also in comparison with similar schools. The present Year 2 class showed a similar level of attainment. In 1999, at age eleven, attainment was above the national average as seen in national tests and in line with that of similar schools. The impact of the literacy hour, a new school building (including a fine library), new resources and new teachers has been considerable and the present Year 6 showed levels of attainment in written work and in reading above those found in similar schools.
- 71 Literacy standards in the school are high and pupils make good progress in English. Younger pupils are able to talk in small and larger groups and to listen and respond to stories and instructions. They understand how to use books and can talk about the pictures in them. Pupils in Reception participate very well in lessons and older pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Standards are fostered by the work in the literacy hour and in other subjects, such as history. Standards in reading and writing are good or better for the majority of pupils in all year groups. Pupils value books and respond well to the creative aspects of writing. Pupils enjoy their work in English and talk with enthusiasm about the books that they have read. They write in a variety of ways depending on the subject and the audience. The majority of pupils express themselves clearly and presentational skills are good because pupils have well established skills in handwriting; they also use word processors when appropriate. Raising standards is a priority in the school development plan and the target is for 92 per cent of pupils at age seven to reach Level 2 or above and for 88 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above.
- 72 Standards are rising with last year's National Curriculum Test results at the end of Key Stage 1 showing a noticeable improvement. The standards observed during the inspection were very good at both key stages. However, there is still a noticeable underachievement of boys both in tests and in written work generally.
- 73 The development of language and literacy is effectively planned. In the Reception class, pupils are provided with a good basis for work in the National Curriculum and quickly begin to work in a way that will help them to progress in literacy. In all year groups speaking and listening skills are developed through activities which often involve discussion.
- 74 Pupils are able to speak confidently to adults and in class, although during the inspection they had little opportunity to contribute to the whole-school assemblies. Older pupils can generate ideas in brain-storming sessions. For example, Year 3

pupils were observed putting forward lists of descriptive words for animals when planning their own myths and fables and in Year 6 they were able to develop detailed character portraits. Drama is well developed and there is a drama club in the school. The work planned for the literacy hour fosters the development of skills in speaking and listening; other subject areas, including history and religious education, also make a valuable contribution.

- 75 Standards in reading are good or better for the majority of pupils and there are some particularly able readers in all year groups. Most pupils enjoy books and take pleasure in reading. The majority of younger pupils can use a variety of strategies to support their reading, including the use of phonics and picture clues. However, a minority of pupils do need more support with the use of these strategies in deciphering unfamiliar words. Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of books appropriate to their ability level. Progress is monitored carefully and ensures that pupils make good progress. Pupils enjoy a close study of fiction and non-fiction texts and by the end of their time in the school they have experienced a rich variety of literature, including a study of two plays by Shakespeare. Few pupils belong to public libraries but their library skills are very well developed as the new school library provides good opportunities for them to develop skills in research. Many pupils have very good reading standards and they are encouraged to make extra progress because of the challenging activities provided in lessons. All pupils study a range of verse and younger pupils particularly enjoy short amusing rhyming stories while older ones appreciate the quality of poems such as 'Pied Beauty'. Some pupils with special educational needs have difficulty in reading but they are well monitored and are making good progress. Higher attaining pupils have good skills in skimming and scanning when looking for information. Pupils are also able to use computers to develop their skills in reading and research.
- 76 Written work is usually well presented, with most pupils being able to use joined up writing well as this is introduced early in their school career. However, the use pencil for most written work below year four does affect the presentation of work to some extent. The more able pupils are able to write about and illustrate their ideas very well and many can produce pieces of extended writing to support their work in other subjects. There is evidence in the classrooms displays and in discussions with children that pupils are encouraged to concentrate on grammar, spelling and punctuation. For example, average pupils in Year 2 were able to explain the use of the speech marks and the apostrophe well and pupils in Reception are already clear about the full stop and capital letter rule. The range of written work is good with evidence of creative and imaginative work and of writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. The stories and books read in the literacy hour often have considerable potential for creative work and pupils take full advantage of this. Younger pupils contribute to displays, for example, on the much loved story of 'Farmer Duck', while older pupils write and illustrate their own anthologies and books. Word processing is used to help pupils improve and extend their written work and to develop skills in drafting and re-drafting.
- 77 Learning is monitored effectively in English and most pupils make good progress. The subject makes a good contribution the social, moral and cultural development of pupils. Effective systems of assessment and recording of information about individual pupils are used in the planning for groups and activities within the class. There is a good match between the teaching strategies in use and the needs of the pupils and this helps them to progress well. Pupils with special educational needs are given the kind support that enables them to make good progress and very able

pupils are challenged. However, in some lessons observed there was insufficient focus on the average and lower ability pupils who need more support, particularly when they find it difficult to remain on task for the whole of the literacy session.

- 78 Pupils enjoy their work in English and their response in lessons is good. They are happy to talk about the books they study and they can recognise and enjoy works from a variety of genres and authors. Pupils of all ages approach tasks in English with confidence and enthusiasm. The majority of younger pupils understand the terms author and illustrator and can distinguish between fiction and non-fiction and enjoy reading both types of book. Older pupils understand how to use reference books or computer software to access information and they enjoy research work. However, a minority of pupils do not behave well during group work when they are expected to work without the direct support of their teacher and a small minority distract other pupils.
- 79 The quality of teaching is always sound and more than half of the lessons observed were judged to be good or better. Class teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of the teaching of the English and they are confident in teaching grammar, spelling and punctuation in small groups or with the whole class. The teaching of creative writing is good and the approach to planning for the literacy hour is very effective. Teachers have mainly high expectations of the work of their pupils and usually provide work that challenges even the most able. In the most successful lessons even pupils with behavioural difficulties are kept firmly on task because of the pace and rigour of the work. However, in less successful lessons the time available is not used well enough and pupils are not kept firmly on task. Planning is good and the literacy programme has been implemented very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and individual education plans and learning support are available. Work is marked frequently, comments are helpful, as well as encouraging, and assessment procedures are now good.
- 80 The subject is well managed, particularly with regard to ensuring continuity and progression. The literacy hour is being implemented effectively and the co-ordinator monitors the teaching of all aspects of English. Resources for the teaching of English are good. There are well chosen resources for work in literacy, including books for teaching poetry and drama and for promoting the multicultural aspects of literature. Several reading schemes are used and there is a good range of books for free reading in the main and class libraries, including some that are suitable for both the most and the least able pupils. There is a clear focus on providing appropriate resources and a rigour in monitoring and planning that has contributed to the high standards observed during the inspection. Since the last inspection standards of teaching and of assessment have improved and new resources and a new library have been provided.

MATHEMATICS

- 81 The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests and assessments showed that standards of attainment were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Analysis of performance over a three-year period reveals a picture of improvement similar to that seen nationally. However, over the past few years, the performance of girls has been better than that of boys. Their performance exceeds the national average for their age group by 2.3 points; boys' performance exceeds the average for their age group by 1.6 points. The school is aware of this issue and of the need to continue to improve the level of boys' performance.

Overall, there has been improvement at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection which noted under-performance by a significant minority of pupils. The picture at Key Stage 2 is similar. Here, the performance in the 1999 tests and over the same three-year period showed attainment to be well above the national average. However, when compared with similar schools, standards are above the average. Analysis of performance over a three-year period shows improvement to be on a level with the national rise. Over this period, girls continue to out-perform boys as they do in Key Stage 1: boys' performance exceeds the national average for their age group by 1.4 points; girls exceed the average by 2.0 points. Nevertheless, there has been overall good improvements since the last inspection which noted standards marginally below the national average, with unsatisfactory standards among higher attainers. The current performance of pupils in Years 2 and 6 reveals that these pupils are achieving above average standards.

- 82 Inspection evidence shows that the quality of learning at Key Stage 1 is very good. Pupils receive a well-balanced mathematics curriculum that provides coverage of all the required strands of the National Curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy is providing a clear structure for the teaching of the subject and, if the good standards of teaching and learning that were observed during the inspection are maintained, standards will continue to rise. A very good emphasis is placed on the development of numeracy and teachers seek opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in science, they measure time, distance and weight when setting up a fair test and a good example of measuring was seen in work where pupils determined how shadows change during the course of a day. Pupils use information technology to enter data and predict how springs will stretch. By the age of seven, most pupils have a very good understanding of number systems and place value and can undertake effective investigations, such as those on the height of different children and ways of making the four rules of number work. They are confident when using mathematics, most can name common two and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties accurately. In particular, there is good use of the correct mathematical terminology and teachers use subject specific vocabulary when teaching.
- 83 Pupils make overall good progress at Key Stage 2. Features accounting for this are to be found mainly in the planning of both the curriculum and lessons; this ensures that knowledge is developed systematically. It is also linked to the quality of teaching, which is never less than sound and is good in Year 6. The National Numeracy Strategy continues to increase pupils' skills and confidence in tackling problems; in particular, pupils develop very good skills in mental arithmetic and this improves the quality of their learning. There is a good balance between numeracy work and data handling. Pupils with special educational needs make overall satisfactory progress and some attain Level 4 of the National Curriculum; pupils of average attainment are generally confident with number but, in some lessons seen at Key Stage 2, the teacher's attention was often focused on those with special educational needs and higher attainers. The latter make good progress and by the end of the key stage can use brackets correctly in complicated expressions, understand and use negative co-ordinates and work to three decimal places. Overall, girls tend to progress better than boys at Key Stage 2; although the school is aware of this it has not developed strategies to effect significant improvement. In some otherwise satisfactory or good lessons, boys' attention was often seen to wander and particular instances were noted of a minority making remarks and behaving in ways inappropriate to a formal mathematics lesson.

- 84 Overall, the quality of teaching of mathematics is good. It is at least good and sometimes very good at Key Stage 1; at Key Stage 2 it is at least satisfactory and often good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. This marks an improvement since the earlier report which noted weaknesses linked to undemanding work for higher attainers and a lack of pace and variety in some lessons. Both have been addressed well by the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the provision of booster classes. However, the last report also noted inappropriate responses to poor behaviour by some pupils and this has yet to be addressed effectively at Key Stage 2. Teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and there are no weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding. They plan work extremely well and teach the basic skills effectively. The overall quality of teaching has a direct bearing on attainment and the rate of progress now being achieved. Good examples were seen of the skilful introduction and reinforcement of mathematical concepts: for example, when ordering decimals from 530 to 5.3, the teacher asked a Year 6 class, 'What would you divide by 100?'. Similarly, she finished the lesson by highlighting the key facts, ideas and vocabulary which had been learnt. Work is marked regularly and extremely well, teachers use marking both as a record of progress and as an opportunity to help the development of individual pupils. Homework is set regularly and parents are satisfied with the amount; usually, homework is planned effectively into the organisation of lessons.
- 85 The co-ordinator has worked hard since the last inspection and standards in the subject have improved. In particular, the quality of teaching and the standards reached by pupils. It now remains to address issues linked to the comparative underachievement of boys if the school is to sustain its recent improvement.

SCIENCE

- 86 In 1999, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment recorded in National Curriculum Tests was well above the national average and above that of similar schools. Attainment in the National Curriculum Tests has increased since the previous inspection. However, girls have consistently out-performed boys over the last three years. Teacher assessments, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, indicated that 87 per cent of pupils achieve the expected Level 2 or above, a very high figure, and 41 per cent attained the higher Level 3, a figure well above the national average.
- 87 The previous inspection found that attainment was average at both key stages. The school has made good progress since then and inspection evidence confirms that attainment has improved throughout the school. This improvement is evident in both Year 2 and in Year 6 and is associated with both good teaching and clear planning. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is likely to be as high as last year's pupils.
- 88 During Key Stage 1, pupils acquire good knowledge and skills. Pupils in Year 2 construct simple electrical circuits, predict from basic circuit diagrams whether the bulb will light or not and then test whether their predictions are correct. They observe and describe the different properties of a range of building materials well. Pupils of all abilities make good progress as pupils are moved on to more demanding tasks appropriately. Younger pupils know that senses are used to aid accurate observation and deduction in science as some good work from their visit to Herstmonceux Science Centre shows. They also know the different conditions which plants need to grow effectively.

- 89 During Key Stage 2 teachers build soundly on the good base achieved by Year 2; there is a steady improvement in standards linked to careful planning and some interesting activities. Sufficient time is also given to the subject. Particularly good investigative work is apparent: in Year 3, pupils do interesting work on soil samples before moving on to make some interesting observations and comparisons of fox cub skulls and bird spines in Year 4. Pupils also produce some interesting work on whether boys can run faster than girls. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a very good understanding of the steps necessary to plan, carry out and record the results of an investigation. Their scientific knowledge also expands rapidly through some interesting teaching and careful planning. They know about the force of friction and they use a Newton meter correctly to measure forces during their investigations. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' information technology capability: in Year 1, pupils did some interesting work using computers on the height of sunflowers having studied a typical life cycle; older pupils use a CD-ROM to research the human body and use appropriate software for graphs and spreadsheets. Similarly, careful recording and writing up of experiments shows good use of numeracy when measuring temperature, volume, speed and height. Pupils handle data well. Overall, the quality of written work is generally good but boys do not record as comprehensively or as neatly as girls.
- 90 Pupils enjoy their science and this contributes to the quality of learning: they are interested by the facts and enjoy completing experiments. The majority of pupils are keen to answer questions and to make suggestions. From early in Key Stage 1, they are confident enough to explain their ideas. However, whilst pupils in Key Stage 2 generally work well together when preparing and conducting experiments, examples were seen of occasional silly or selfish behaviour.
- 91 Teaching is good at Key Stage 1. From an early stage pupils are introduced to the principles of both scientific investigation and appropriate language, as when a pupil said, 'I know when I make my prediction I will be guessing.' In answer to a question, another replied 'Gravity keeps us on the ground'. Teachers also develop numerical skills systematically by requiring bar graphs after the car ramp experiment. As a result of this teaching, higher attaining pupils in Year 1 grasp the principles of the travelling speeds of a feather and a marble well. Lessons seen at Key Stage 2 were at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Further examples of very good planning were seen in lessons on how to design experiments to discover how to keep things cold and to find out the necessary conditions for evaporation. Teachers use scientific vocabulary well and organise resources effectively, as when setting out beakers, water and dishes in the lesson on evaporation. In the more effective lessons, pupils' work and understanding is checked carefully by either the teacher or classroom assistant. However, on occasions pupils are allowed to 'get on' and do not always apply themselves to their work consistently. Teachers' marking is of a high order: it is done regularly and fully and is always constructive. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning is very good.
- 92 The subject benefits from good leadership which has resulted in a recent improvement in standards. Pupils follow a broad curriculum which ensures a very good balance between the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. This assists pupils' learning greatly. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development: they are led through the investigations so that they experience the excitement and wonder of finding out for themselves. This was seen to good effect when Year 1 pupils spoke of their amazement when they flicked a switch at the Science Centre and magnified their eyes hugely. Resources are of good quality

and accommodation is first class: this helps to ensure good conditions for practical work. Overall, the subject is well placed to sustain the improvement noted since the time of the last report.

ART

- 93 Only one lesson in art was observed during the inspection. However, there is a detailed policy and planning is very clear and shows a comprehensive coverage of the appropriate areas of work. The provision for art in the school is good.
- 94 The pupils' work, which is so effectively displayed around the school, shows a high level of achievement in all aspects of art, including collage, drawing, painting and the use of colour. The standard of work in collage and water colour painting is particularly good. Pupils who belong to the flourishing art club have produced an interesting display of three-dimensional portraits and they were also observed working confidently with water colours. Pupils have the opportunity develop techniques in painting, drawing, printing and work in clay and all, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the acquisition of skills in practical tasks. For example, work on the making of repetitive patterns is planned cleverly to allow more able pupils to use stencils while those whose skills are less well developed use a printing technique. Pupils also have a good knowledge of the work of famous artists; Children in Year 2 being able to speak eloquently about the characteristics of the work of Monet. By Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the work of a variety of artists and styles of painting.
- 95 The approach to art in the school is one that fosters the development of skills and aesthetic awareness. Art is also used well to support work in other subjects. Pupils have completed observational drawing, still life paintings and very effective collages related to their work in other subjects. For example, there are vivid pieces on books and stories studied in literacy and a particularly striking collage of silhouettes of burning buildings during the Great Fire of London. Three-dimensional creative work is also closely related to other subjects in the curriculum and pupils have also produced three-dimensional landscapes in the style of El Greco in ceramics lessons. The Reception class provide enjoyable and exciting introduction to work in art and this good start in the subject is reflected in the willingness of pupils to attempt more challenging activities in art as they progress through the school.
- 96 The work around the school shows that teaching is good and that there is an appropriate focus on the work of famous artists and on the teaching of skills in drawing and painting. Art is well resourced and basic materials and equipment are readily accessible. Good quality art books, posters and prints are used by pupils and art related computer software was being used during the inspection. Library resources are good. All contribute to enhancing standards. The subject is managed well: the co-ordinator brings flair and enthusiasm to the subject. Planning is good in all aspects of work and provision has improved since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 97 Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection. There is now a good policy and scheme of work; planning is better and arrangements are in place to assess pupils. As a consequence, the range of skills and techniques used by the pupils and the quality of products they produce improve as they move through the school. Their design skills are also promoted.

- 98 No lessons were observed during the inspection week, and no secure judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. A scrutiny of pupils' work, photographs, a study of planning documents and discussions with staff, however, enable some observations to be made. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and meet expectations for their age and a significant number achieve above this. There is no observable difference between girls' and boys' work.
- 99 Seven year olds have experience of making vehicles and, in a project linked to religious education, they make a coat of many colours. They produce a design and made comments evaluating its quality. Pupils also explore different techniques of applying detail to their templates for the coat before making the coats in different materials. As part of the assessment process, pupils are involved in appraising the final product. Eleven year olds have just begun a topic to design and produce a fairground ride that will produce a rotating movement. Although only in the initial stage of this design brief, pupils draw on their knowledge to talk about the links this topic will have with science. They say how they might use belts and pulleys and learn more about control using electric motors.
- 100 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has an action plan which includes a greater emphasis on the monitoring of skills teaching across the school. The policy and scheme of work, which is based on national guidance, ensures that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on progressively. For example, it includes the planned use of different construction kits and tools depending on the age of the pupils. These resources have improved since the last inspection. Assessment is linked to both evaluation and self-assessment and is effective in developing standards.

GEOGRAPHY

- 101 Geography and history are taught in alternate blocked units and the focus for teaching at the time of the inspection was history. Evidence is based on displays, scrutiny of work, talking to staff and a study of planning documents. Seven year olds reach standards that are above those expected for their age. They study the seaside and an island home. They identify the differences between towns and villages and use their knowledge from topics covered earlier in the key stage to make interesting comparisons with the local area. They are aware of features that may be found at the seaside and use appropriate vocabulary well. Pupils are developing knowledge, skills and understanding which help them to appreciate the wider world and they use their literacy skills to record work effectively in a variety of different ways.
- 102 Eleven year olds reach standards above those expected for their age and their knowledge and understanding in other areas of the curriculum contribute to this achievement. For example, developing a sense of inquiry and using a variety of sources for gathering information is promoted in history, expressing findings in a report is supported by literacy skills and the presentation of work in a variety of formats is promoted through mathematics and information technology. Learning opportunities focus successfully on developing pupils' understanding of world climates and of places in both Europe and the United Kingdom. Pupils learn how to compare one locality with another when they study such techniques on a residential trip in Year 6. As a result, they also gain a better understanding of human and

physical geography. They use fieldwork well to investigate and develop a greater understanding of making and using maps and photographs to understand better the geography of places.

- 103 The last report indicated that there were weaknesses in learning specific geographical skills due to the shortage of time in lessons. At that time, monitoring of planning and the delivery of the subject had not been a priority. The current co-ordinator has reviewed the time allocation and undertaken effective monitoring. As a result, there has been good improvement. There is also a policy and a scheme of work based on national guidelines. Arrangements for assessment are informal, but satisfactory. Pupils' work is sampled regularly and marked very well. Consequently, staff and pupils are aware of the areas for improvement. Resources were adequate at the time of the last inspection but these have been upgraded and the school is now well stocked.
- 104 The development of a good scheme of work, blocked units of time to focus on the subject and links with other areas of the curriculum have made it possible for pupils to make good progress. Geography is also used to promote the pupils' understanding of other cultures: for example, through the study of a village in India. The local environment used well to develop pupils' understanding of both orienteering and citizenship.

HISTORY

- 105 Although few lessons in history were seen during the inspection, discussions with pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of work, displays and planning documents enables judgements to be made. Attainment in history at ages seven and eleven is better than that expected of pupils of similar age nationally. For example, work on the celebration of the millennium enables pupils to show a high level of understanding of the role of key figures of past centuries.
- 106 The school supports learning in history well and progress in the acquisition of both knowledge and understanding is good. The study of history begins with work on the family and the sequencing of simple stories; it continues with an examination of some aspects of life in the past: for example, the kinds of toys played with by children. The work of pupils in Key Stage 1 shows that they are developing a secure foundation for their work in history and in Year 2 they are able to distinguish between events in stories and those that have actually happened. They can compare aspects of life today with that in the past and they are aware of the way historians find out about the past, for example from eye-witness accounts. Work on the history of The Great Fire of London and the diary of Samuel Pepys shows that pupils can cope with historical evidence when well taught. They are also able to handle genuine domestic equipment and artefacts from the past as the school is well resourced in these respects.
- 107 Work in history at Key Stage 2 is good, being well presented and well illustrated. Displays of work on the Romans include a look at the role of Boudicca in challenging the Romans. Studies of the Second World War include a study of the effect of the war in Kent, empathy work on evacuees and the opportunity to talk to people who had lived in the area during the war. Pupils were seen to make good progress when they were given the opportunity for research using interesting source material on life in Tudor times downloaded from the Internet. The subject is taught in a way that ensures that pupils are able to progress at their own level. Information on

Sumptuary Laws in the sixteenth century was challenging in content, even for the highest attainers. Written work is usually well presented because it is drafted and then corrected and some evidence was seen of the pupils developing skills in word processing. The development of information technology to enhance work in the subject is good and pupils have access to computers and to a well stocked library. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because tasks and resources are matched to their needs.

- 108 The quality of teaching was good or better. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and they are developing an effective skills based approach to teaching. The National Curriculum is well covered and lessons were well planned and resourced. Work is marked frequently and the approach to the subject ensures that all pupils find their lessons challenging and their work rewarding. Pupils enjoy their study of history and benefit from a variety of visits, for example to Dover castle. Resources are satisfactory in all areas and good in many - especially in the availability of objects that help pupils compare life in the past with the present day. Good use is made of the Kent area which is a rich resource for the study of history. Links with other subjects in the curriculum are very well established, for example, in the study of Egypt and the Nile. Local studies are particularly good and pupils find out about the past of their immediate locality as well as of Britain as a whole. Older pupils are able to appreciate that Goudhurst and the surrounding area is rich in examples of our architectural heritage. All of these factors play an important part in maintaining the subject's good standards.
- 109 The management of the subject is the responsibility of an experienced co-ordinator who has developed resources and teaching strategies well. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in teaching and there is a clear focus on skills and structured inquiry. The care in planning at both key stages ensures progression and continuity and pupils are well prepared for work in history at the next key stage.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 110 Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages overall. There are a significant number of children who achieve above expectations in some areas of the subject. These tend to be pupils who have regular access to computers at home. The number of computers available in school has been improved since the last inspection. Other improvements have been made in structuring better the pupils' development of skills. As a result of these improvements pupils maintain sound progress.
- 111 Seven year olds have good mouse and keyboard skills and they can access word processing operations. They use the computer to redraft writing and to present it in a variety of ways. They use art programs well and some of the pupils' results in science are presented in graphical form using the computer. Pupils are confident in using control technology to program a robotic toy. Eleven year olds can use desktop publishing programs. They use this for data presentation in mathematics and science. Referencing and modelling skills are often used well. They can use paint packages to explore graphical modelling and know what the purpose of a spreadsheet is and when they may use it.
- 112 The school's policy for the use of the computer, as an aid for learning, in all curriculum areas is consistently applied in all classes. This is a strength of the

subject and pupils have a wide range of experiences within this context. They are very confident in using the computer to improve the quality and presentation of their work. As a result of this strategy, little direct skill teaching was seen during the inspection. However, the quality of intervention by the teacher when pupils are using computers is frequently good and pupils are taught how to improve or extend the skill they are using. Questioning is good and teachers use pupils' responses to assess their knowledge and understanding. During the skill lesson observed at Key Stage 2 there were weaknesses in the management of behaviour. Pupils are involved satisfactorily in self-assessment and recording. All pupils access and use the Internet and there are some very fine examples of pupils using the information they have downloaded to support their learning in other curriculum areas. Some pupils have knowledge and understanding of E-mail, but they tend to be those with computers at home.

- 113 The school is aiming to build on its strengths and to extend the teaching of information technology in all curriculum areas. It is also planning to develop a network system, using specific funding from the National Grid for Learning and from funds raised by the Friends Association, to enable more pupils to use the Internet. Overall, the school has made a good improvement since the earlier report and is in a strong position to raise standards for all pupils.

MUSIC

- 114 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection but additional evidence has been gained from assemblies, choir rehearsals, teachers' planning and records and discussions with pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make overall sound progress or, on occasions such as performing and appraising, good progress as a result of lessons being structured to provide opportunities to practise skills.
- 115 Effective teaching helps pupils to make good progress and reach appropriate standards by the age of seven. The youngest pupils listen attentively and make good progress as they listen to recorded music before playing their instruments in the correct place and then moving on to perform 'Twinkle, Twinkle'. Pupils' attainments are helped by teaching which encourages them to play their instruments appropriately and to work together. Seven-year-olds can name the more important instruments in an orchestra, beat out their names and play percussion instruments. Standards are helped at Key Stage 2 by annual productions such as 'Alice' and the 'Pied Piper' and by participation in the work of a well attended choir which performs in local festivals. Visiting teachers help with brass tuition and pupils learn about concerts and instruments as part of the provision in assemblies. They compose graphic scores and perform from them; they learn music from their own and other cultures when introduced to yodelling, rap, tribal music and Bach. A good example was seen in Year 6 where pupils were able to distinguish the pitch, texture and timbre of bells before making good use of a worksheet pattern to understand the principles of English bell playing. As a result of such lessons, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Similarly, they reflect on what they hear and try to describe it, as when music from Tibet was likened to 'a huge open space'. Good opportunities are given to appraise music when pupils are required to link the music from television themes to the nature of the programmes they introduce.
- 116 The newly appointed co-ordinator is a specialist who has worked very hard to

enhance the scheme of work and help develop teachers' expertise and confidence. Standards since the last inspection have been sustained. She has developed an effective scheme of work, helped to develop extra-curricular activities and is now planning to improve the quality of assessment. As a result, the subject is in a good position to continue to improve its present standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 117 By the end of Key Stage 1, the standards of progress and the quality of learning of pupils are mainly above expectations. This is linked to teaching, which is mainly good, a good scheme of work and helpful assessment. There is also a well equipped hall.
- 118 At Key Stage 1, pupils perform gymnastics well and link work on both floor and apparatus competently. Most balance well and vary the way they use their bodies during a particular sequence. They benefit from being encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performance and to suggest ways of improving quality. Good pair work results in the production of some accurate symmetrical shapes and these are linked imaginatively to work in mathematics. They throw and catch well and apply these skills well when they play team games.
- 119 During the inspection, it was only possible to observe lessons in gymnastics and some outdoor hockey. Overall, the foundation laid at Key Stage 1 are not fully built upon at Key Stage 2 and, by age eleven, attainment is at the national expectation. This is related mainly to weaknesses observed in the quality of teaching; the last inspection report also judged teaching to have been better at Key Stage 1. It is not linked to the time given to the subject which is average, the scheme of work or the accommodation and equipment which is very good. For example, Year 3 pupils do not develop skills of travelling and sequencing because of a lack of teacher control and pace. However, when older pupils apply themselves and compete they show good skills of receiving, hitting and dribbling in hockey. Where there is satisfactory teacher expertise, as in Year 4 gymnastics and in extra-curricular football, standards of attainment are sound.
- 120 The teaching of physical education is good at Key Stage 1; it is more variable but overall satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Features of good teaching which play an important part in helping the quality of learning are good organisation and methods which deliver the planned lessons well. In those lessons, for example, pupils are required to practise previously mastered skills, such as running and stopping, before moving on to a new one like changing direction. Teachers also work on the skills levels of individuals and groups and invite them to evaluate their work. Unsatisfactory features of teaching, which are also found in otherwise satisfactory lessons, are linked to both lack of expertise and, more importantly, to difficulties in managing the behaviour of small groups of pupils, often boys. The school is planning to improve teachers' confidence by organising in-service training at a local sports college but further improvements at Key Stage 2 await improvements in class management.
- 121 The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the curricular and organisational weaknesses noted at the time of the earlier report and there has been sound improvement. There is a policy, scheme of work and better assessment. There is now a well-equipped, large hall and the school has both a good hard play area and the use of a nearby games field. It no longer has its own

swimming pool but uses the local community pool and records indicate that most pupils aged eleven can swim at least 25 metres. Some parents expressed concern about the lack of time for physical education and games; however, although the overall allocation is appropriate, some sessions at Key Stage 1 are too long.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 122 The previous inspection indicated that attainment at the end of both key stages was similar to that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have a good understanding of many features of Christianity and a suitably broad knowledge of other world faiths. They understand that praying is communicating with God and higher attaining pupils, in particular, are aware of the relationship between Judaism, Jesus and Christianity. They know about the main festivals, features and stories associated with Islam and Hinduism: for example, they know that the festival of Holi celebrates the triumph of good over evil and that the festival of light explains the story of Rama and Sita who were lost in the darkness.
- 123 Pupils' understanding is helped by the quality of teaching, the imaginative use of resources which promotes a multi-faith perspective and the school's links with the local church. Thus pupils show in discussion that they understand the symbolism associated with light and candles in the Christian faith in Advent and that of Jesus as 'The Light of the World'. Most pupils reflect satisfactorily on wider aspects of religious belief and meaning: for example, they are aware that world faiths have a Supreme God and, during the inspection, they were examining how different religious communities welcome babies into the world.
- 124 By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding reflect the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They know about stories from both the Old and New Testament: for example, they learnt the story of David and Goliath through some well taught role-play. Circle time also plays a valuable part in helping their early understanding of religious ideas.
- 125 Pupils' generally good attitudes help their learning; they show both interest and curiosity. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils were keen to study the aesthetic value of Indian religious objects and of the clothes worn on ceremonial occasions. In circle time and in an assembly taken by the vicar they listened carefully to the stories being told.
- 126 The lessons seen during the inspection were good and this marks an improvement on the earlier report. Features of effective teaching which helped learning and attainment are clear planning, good subject knowledge and thoughtful links with other subjects. For example, work in art and geography provides valuable background detail to the study of Hinduism. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy as pupils communicate their knowledge and understanding in good pieces of extended writing.
- 127 The subject is managed well and enjoys good resources and strong links with the local church. The scheme of work has been improved since the last inspection and offers effective support to teachers. Currently, however, the links between assembly themes and the religious education programme are not fully developed. Nevertheless, overall improvement since the last inspection has been good and, provided planning for spiritual and moral development across the school are

strengthened, the school has a good capacity for further advance.